National Library of Canada
Acquisitions and Bibliographic Services Branch
395 Wellington Street
Ottawa, Ontario
K1A 0N4

Bibliothèque nationale du Canada
Direction des acquisitions et des services bibliographiques
395, rue Wellington
Ottawa (Ontario)
K1A 0N4

Your file Votre référence

Our file Notre référence

NOTICE

The quality of this microform is heavily dependent upon the quality of the original thesis submitted for microfilming. Every effort has been made to ensure the highest quality of reproduction possible.

If pages are missing, contact the university which granted the degree.

Some pages may have indistinct print especially if the original pages were typed with a poor typewriter ribbon or if the university sent us an inferior photocopy.

Reproduction in full or in part of this microform is governed by the Canadian Copyright Act, R.S.C. 1970, c. C-30, and subsequent amendments.

AVIS

La qualité de cette microforme dépend grandement de la qualité de la thèse soumise au microfilmage. Nous avons tout fait pour assurer une qualité supérieure de reproduction.

S'il manque des pages, veuillez communiquer avec l'université qui a conféré le grade.

La qualité d'impression de certaines pages peut laisser à désirer, surtout si les pages originales ont été dactylographiées à l'aide d'un ruban usé ou si l'université nous a fait parvenir une photocopie de qualité inférieure.

La reproduction, même partielle, de cette microforme est soumise à la Loi canadienne sur le droit d'auteur, SRC 1970, c. C-30, et ses amendements subséquents.

Canada

UNIVERSITY OF ALBERTA

EXPERIENCES OF GRADE ONE FRENCH IMMERSION TEACHERS

DENISE BOURASSA-TREMBLAY

A thesis submitted to the Faculty of Graduate Studies and Research in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Education.

DEPARTMENT OF SECONDARY EDUCATION

EDMONTON, ALBERTA
FALL 1992

National Library of Canada
Bibliothèque nationale du Canada

Canadian Theses Service
Service des thèses canadiennes

Ottawa, Canada
K1A 0N4

The author has granted an irrevocable non-exclusive licence allowing the National Library of Canada to reproduce, loan, distribute or sell copies of his/her thesis by any means and in any form or format, making this thesis available to interested persons.

L'auteur a accordé une licence irrévocable et non exclusive permettant à la Bibliothèque nationale du Canada de reproduire, prêter, distribuer ou vendre des copies de sa thèse de quelque manière et sous quelque forme que ce soit pour mettre des exemplaires de cette thèse à la disposition des personnes intéressées.

The author retains ownership of the copyright in his/her thesis. Neither the thesis nor substantial extracts from it may be printed or otherwise reproduced without his/her permission.

L'auteur conserve la propriété du droit d'auteur qui protège sa thèse. Ni la thèse ni des extraits substantiels de celle-ci ne doivent être imprimés ou autrement reproduits sans son autorisation.

ISBN 0-315-77212-3

Canada

UNIVERSITY OF ALBERTA

RELEASE FORM

NAME OF AUTHOR	Denise Bourassa-Tremblay
TITLE OF THESIS:	Experiences of Grade One French Immersion Teachers
DEGREE:	Master of Education
YEAR THIS DEGREE GRANTED:	1992

Permission is hereby granted to the University of Alberta Library to reproduce single copies of this thesis and to lend or sell such copies for private, scholarly or scientific research purposes only.

The author reserves all other publication and other rights in association with the copyright in the thesis, and except as hereinbefore provided neither the thesis nor any substantial portion thereof may be printed or otherwise reproduced in any material form whatever without the author's prior written permission.

Denise Bourassa-Tremblay

5 Alphonse Court
St. Albert, Alberta
T8N 5N9

October 5, 1992
Date

UNIVERSITY OF ALBERTA

FACULTY OF GRADUATE STUDIES AND RESEARCH

The undersigned certify that they have read, and recommended to the Faculty of Graduate Studies and Research for acceptance, a thesis entitled EXPERIENCES OF GRADE ONE FRENCH IMMERSION TEACHERS submitted by DENISE BOURASSA-TREMBLAY in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of MASTER OF EDUCATION.

Dr. D. V. Parker
Supervisor

Dr. O. Bilash

Dr. H. M. R. Hayden

September 10, 1992
Date

ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study was to investigate the experiences of grade one early total French immersion teachers delivering a curriculum in French to students who are learning the language.

A structured questionnaire comprising fifty-seven open-ended questions designed to give teachers maximum freedom in their answers solicited their input in ten specific categories: background information, planning, teaching, evaluation of student learning, communication with students, communication with colleagues and administrators, communication with parents, success, concerns, and other considerations.

A personal interview was conducted with eleven grade one early total French immersion teachers from eight schools in four school jurisdictions in Edmonton and its surrounding areas. Careful attention was given to having representation from single, dual, and multi-track school contexts.

The results of this study show that teachers were impressed with the accomplishments of the immersion program and were faithfully searching for ways to improve its effectiveness. The study revealed major differences with respect to teachers' views and practices in teaching and evaluating formal literacy and academic concepts through the medium of a second language. The

study also highlighted major differences between single, dual, and multi-track schools in the following three areas: communication with colleagues and administrators, planning conditions for teachers, and learning conditions especially for students experiencing difficulties. Finally, results from this study demonstrated that five areas were in need of attention for French immersion to reach its full potential in the 1990s: 1) provincial programs of studies that recognize the second language element of French immersion across the curriculum, 2) specific and effective organizational conditions for French immersion program delivery at the school level; 3) better understanding of the role of first language in the acquisition of a second language; 4) more accountability to students enrolled in the program, so that all of them have the opportunity to be successful, and; 5) legitimization of parental concerns regarding their child's progress in the program, as well as the need to find ways to reduce or eliminate the source of their anxiety.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I would like to extend my most sincere gratitude to the following people without whom this study would not have been possible.

To Dr. D. V. Parker for his trust in me, constant support and constructive advice;

to Dr. O. Bilash and Dr. H. M. R. Hayden for their contributions as committee members;

to my employer St. Albert School District No. 3 for its valuable support;

to the teachers who piloted the interview questionnaire for their constructive criticism;

to the teachers who participated in the study for their collaboration;

to my colleagues for sharing their expertise and time;

to my parents for introducing me to the world of second languages and instilling in me the value of bilingualism and multiculturalism;

to my family for their patience, support, understanding, and encouragement.

To all of you, "un gros merci"!

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Page

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION 1

General Statement of the Problem 2
Specific Research Questions 4
Significance of the Problem 6
Assumptions 6
Delimitations 7
Limitations 8
Definition of Terms 8
Summary 10

CHAPTER II

A REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE 11

Introduction 11
Achievement Outcomes 11
Effective Bilingual Education Principles 13
Additive Bilingual Enrichment 13
Linguistic Interdependence 14
Threshold 15
Sufficient Communicative Interaction 15
Program Considerations 16
French Immersion Parents' Goals and Concerns 17
The Suitability of French Immersion for All Students 20
The Development of Literacy Skills in a Bilingual Context 22
Summary 25
Conceptual Framework 25

CHAPTER III

METHODOLOGY 28

Research Design 28
Research Questionnaire 30
Pilot Study 30
Selection of Respondents 31
Data Collection 31
Data Analysis 32
Ethical Considerations 33

CHAPTER IV

ANALYSIS OF QUESTIONNAIRE DATA 35

Introduction 35
Background Information 35
Discussion of Results 40
Planning 43
Discussion of Results 52
Teaching 58
Discussion of Results 69
Evaluation of Student Learning 79
Discussion of Results 90
Communication with Students 96
Discussion of Results 107
Communication with Colleagues and School Administrators 111
Discussion of Results 114
Communication with Parents 119
Discussion of Results 123
Success 126
Discussion of Results 129
Concerns 131
Discussion of Results 136
Other considerations 139
Discussion of Results 143

CHAPTER V

SUMMARY, IMPLICATIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FURTHER RESEARCH 147
Summary of the Study 147

Summary of Major Findings 149
Background Information 149
Planning 150
Teaching 151
Evaluation of Student Learning 153
Communication with Students 155
Communication with Colleagues and School Administrators 155
Communication with parents 157
Success 157
Concerns 158
Other Considerations 159
Implications 160
Recommendations for Further Research 165

BIBLIOGRAPHY 169

APPENDIX 177

LIST OF TABLES

		Page
Table 1	French Immersion 1965-1992	145

LIST OF FIGURES

Page

Figure 1 Program Delivery Contexts 36

Figure 2 Grade Levels by Program 37

Figure 3 Teachers' First Language 38

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

For many countries in the world, bilingualism has been a long established fact of life and is embedded in mandatory components of public education programs. When Canada joined the ranks of officially bilingual countries in 1968 with the passing of the Official Languages Act, a renewed interest in second language programs emerged. As can be imagined, the passage from legal act to practical ways of achieving bilingualism such as public bilingual educational programs needed the commitment and cooperation of Canadians. In a country where the cultural context has often been in a state of crisis, questions of language awoke an emotional force that created some animosity or defensiveness between different ethnic groups, leaving little hope for a consensus on bilingual education. The major reason for language being a problem was the fact that not every Canadian shared common views on bilingualism. On the one hand, some people viewed bilingualism as a costly, utopian ideal of little use, pursued by a handful of federalists in their political quest for a united Canada. On the other hand, people saw bilingualism as facilitating inter-ethnic communication and considered it a personal asset for cultural, intellectual and social reasons.

With these conflicting views on bilingualism, second language programs could not be isolated from their political context and did not always make their ways into mandatory provincial basic education programs. Program offerings have reflected various degrees of commitment by provincial governments ranging from an option to basic curriculum, from three-year to twelve-year programs, from core to extended programs, from late to early, and partial to total immersion programs, all promising some form of bilingualism and all creating confusion in the minds of the public as to the goals of bilingual education.

General Statement of the Problem

Of all the programs offered in Canada, the most successful model was the brainchild of a small group of Anglophone parents dissatisfied with the lamentable French proficiency of their children graduating from the English Protestant school system in Quebec (Melikof 1972). In 1963, inspired by the French language proficiency of Anglophone students attending regular French Catholic schools, they requested a publicly funded French as a second language program designed for Anglophone students that would offer the same opportunities for language proficiency development, while maintaining English protestant values. Their goal was to allow children of any intellectual capacity to attain bilingualism at the end of elementary school at no cost to their first language development.

In September 1966, after intensive groundwork done by the parents, the St. Lambert Board skeptically implemented the Home-School Language Switch Program at the kindergarten level. In this program, French was the exclusive medium of instruction in kindergarten and grade one. English language arts were taught from grade two onward. This experiment was tolerated with the condition that it would be constantly and scientifically assessed and evaluated, and immediately terminated if it proved to have negative consequences for the general educational progress of the children. A team of undergraduate and graduate students under the leadership of W.E. Lambert and G. R. Tucker from McGill University collaborated in this investigation. Their professional approach yielded a well documented research heritage for the bilingual education field. Their seminal studies demonstrated that children in the program could attain high levels of French proficiency and, when compared to students enrolled in regular English programs, achieve at the end of grade four, comparable or above average results in all other school subjects and this at no cost to the development of their English language (Lambert, Tucker, 1972). This Home-School Language Switch program was the beginning of French immersion programming as we know it in Canada today.

The St. Lambert experiment became the corner-stone of bilingual education in the world. In spite of their success and promising educational value, French immersion programs rarely became a proactive endeavor initiated by school boards. The

implementation of such programs continued to rely heavily on strong parental pressure and involvement.

Twenty five years later, parents and educators continue to be impressed by the successes of French immersion programs (Cummins, 1983; Genesee, 1983; Carey, 1984; Lapkin, Shapson, Swain, 1990). However, most of actual programs are still functioning within an educational paradigm established in the 1960s for minority students learning a majority language. Does this paradigm fulfill the needs of majority students learning a minority language in the 1990s? Considering the dynamic and evolutionary nature of education, and the greater number and diversity of students enrolling in the program, it is timely for researchers to shift from program outcomes to program delivery. "It is time to document what it is that immersion teachers do in immersion programs" (Tardif and Weber 1987). Similarly, Lapkin, Swain and Shapson (1990) highlighted a need for more research on teaching process variables in their proposed French immersion Research Agenda for the 90s.

Specific Research Questions

The main purpose of this study was to investigate the experiences of grade one early total French immersion teachers delivering a curriculum in French to learners who are learning the language. To achieve this goal, an interpretive paradigm

methodology design was adopted to allow for the description of teachers' experiences from their own perspective.

The following questions guided the research process:

1. What is teaching at the grade one level of an early total French immersion program?

2. What do grade one early total French immersion teachers think about their teaching experience in the program?

To find answers to these two questions, a structured interview (which will be further described in Chapter Four) composed of fifty-seven open-ended questions, was conducted with eleven grade one French immersion teachers. The areas that were investigated were the following:

Background information;
Planning;
Teaching;
Evaluation of student learning;
Communication with students;
Communication with colleagues and administrators;
Communication with parents;
Success;
Concerns;
Other Considerations.

Significance of the Problem

This study has both theoretical and practical significance. The results may be of interest to all stakeholders in bilingual education.

On the theoretical side, since this study focused on the experiences of grade one early total French immersion teachers, it was hoped that it would provide new insights into what facilitates or hinders teaching in a French immersion school context.

On the practical side, it may improve existing practices by helping administrators make more informed decisions about the delivery of French immersion education in their jurisdictions. It may also help teachers maximize their teaching experiences with learners. More importantly, the greatest beneficiaries of this study ultimately will be the learners enrolled in early total French immersion programs.

Assumptions

1. All schools involved in the study had the same bilingual education goal, which is to develop high levels of French language proficiency at no cost to English language and academic development.

2. Teachers selected for the study were representative of the early total French immersion teacher population.

3. The structured interview process with open-ended questions developed to collect information from teachers was valid and reliable.

4. Teachers responded honestly to the questions they were asked.

Delimitations

1. The population of this study involved only eight schools in four school jurisdictions offering an early total French immersion.

2. All school jurisdictions were from the Edmonton area, in Alberta.

3. Representation from the population was restricted to eleven teachers.

Limitations

The major limitations of the study came from the possible restrictions inherent in the selection of the subjects and in the time frame chosen to conduct the study.

1. This study was confined to a small sampling of eleven teachers.

2. The schools and jurisdictions chosen for the study may have presented unique features which affected the teaching process and which were not immediately obvious.

Definition of Terms.

The following key terms needed to be defined to ensure correct interpretation of the study:

1. Context of delivery:

- "immersion centre" or "single-track school" refers to a school where the only program offered to students is the French immersion program.

- "dual-track school" refers to a school where French immersion and another program, usually English, are offered.

- "multi-track school" refers to a school where French immersion and other programs are offered.

2. Entry point:

- "early immersion" refers to a program starting at the kindergarten or grade one level.

- "middle immersion" refers to a program starting at an upper elementary level.

- late immersion refers to a program starting at a junior high level.

3. French immersion program:

-refers to a "school program designed for children of the same linguistic and cultural background (mainly Anglophones) who have had no prior experience with the French language and are put together in a classroom setting where French is used as the main medium of instruction" (Cummins 1986).

4. Language of instruction:

- "total or full immersion" refers to a situation where French is the language of instruction for all school subjects except for English Language Arts which can be introduced at anytime from grade one onward.

- "partial immersion" refers to a situation where English and French are the languages of instruction in varying proportions. English is the language of instruction for some school subjects other than English Language Arts.

Summary

This chapter began by demonstrating the French immersion phenomenon in Canada. Although French immersion has been one of the most researched educational program in Canada, a call for new perspectives in French immersion research was identified. This researcher proposed to investigate the experiences of grade one early total French immersion teachers delivering a curriculum in French to students who are learning the language. The research population was comprised of eleven teachers teaching in an early total French immersion program, in eight different schools, from four school jurisdictions. The chapter was concluded by listing assumptions, delimitations, limitations and definitions which would ensure correct interpretation of the study.

CHAPTER II

REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

Introduction

In this chapter, three key areas of French immersion which form the basis for the conceptual framework of this study were explored. First, students' achievement outcomes in French immersion programs; second, effective bilingual education principles, and third, some program considerations regarding the early total French immersion program. Finally, following a summary of the review of the literature, there is a presentation and discussion of the conceptual framework of this study.

Achievement Outcomes

Since the inception of French immersion in Canada, the survival of the various programs - early, middle, late, total, partial - has been dependent upon one condition - the development of bilingualism at no detriment to English Language and academic skills development. Consequently, it is not surprising that the focus of most French immersion studies conducted in the early years of the program has been on student achievement. The success of French immersion can be attributed to the fact that most studies conducted in the 1970s

and 1980s have demonstrated that students in French immersion programs were developing high levels of proficiency in French and English and were succeeding academically as well as or better than students in unilingual programs. (Lambert and Tucker, 1972; Barik and Swain, 1976; Carey, 1984; Swain, Lapkin, and Andrew, 1981; Cummins, 1983; Genesee, 1983). These studies however, totally ignored the fact that most children who had not done well had dropped out of the program. Nevertheless, the convincing results of the students who have stayed in French immersion programs have proven the effectiveness of such programs and contributed to their rapid growth. In 1991, Statistics Canada reported that a total of 288,000 students were enrolled in French immersion. This enrollment represented an increase of approximately 1500% over the last fifteen years.

Not all researchers gave "carte blanche" to French immersion program outcome studies. Carey (1984) and Reynolds (1991) have questioned the results of past studies and raised some concerns regarding their methodological designs. Both underlined problems with matching a French immersion population with a control group of students in regular English programs. According to Carey and Reynolds, most research studies neglected the fact that the two groups differed on some powerful and theoretically relevant variables, mainly the socioeconomic status and the I.Q. of students. Consequently, Carey pointed out that it is difficult to draw conclusions about the success of French immersion based only on past achievement outcome studies.

Effective Bilingual Education Principles

In the late 1980s, Cummins (1986, 1989) assisted the field of bilingual education by providing a theoretical framework for effective bilingual education. He proposed four theoretical principles essential for effective implementation of bilingual education programs: the additive bilingual enrichment principle, the interdependence principle, the threshold principle, and the sufficient communicative interaction principle.

The Additive Bilingual Enrichment Principle

Until 1960, findings from bilingual education research had given perplexing results. What had worked in one context not only proved to be ineffective in another context, but sometimes had detrimental effects. A look at the socio-cultural context of the learners revealed interesting results. The relationship between the language spoken by a child and the language of the society in power (majority language) was playing a previously underestimated role in the early years of a child's global education development. On the one hand, when a minority language child was receiving full school instruction in a majority language, it was observed that bilingualism often had negative effects. In these cases, the first language (minority language) was denied support in the school and in the

society and was soon replaced by the second language (majority language). Consequently, the child had difficulty in developing adequate literacy skills to function in an academic setting. In this scenario, bilingualism had negative effects on a child's global education. On the other hand, when a child from a majority language was receiving full school instruction in a minority language, it was observed that bilingualism had positive effects. The first language (majority language) continued to be strongly supported by the society, and the second language (minority language) was reinforced in the school leading to the development of two languages. In this situation, the second language was added to the first language. These two cases exemplified the possible contradictory effects of bilingual education: additive bilingualism or subtractive bilingualism.

The Linguistic Interdependence Principle

The linguistic interdependence principle refers to the concept that even though surface features of first and second languages are clearly separate and different, there is, at the thought level, an underlying proficiency in academic, cognitive and literacy-related skills. Concepts and skills learned in one language do not have to be relearned in another language. This underlying proficiency allows for transfer across languages. Consequently, time and effort spent developing proficiency in one language are beneficial for the other language, and knowledge and skills acquired in one language can transfer to the other language.

The Threshold Principle

The threshold principle proposes that a certain level of linguistic competence must be attained in one language before a child can successfully respond to the demands of a bilingual academic setting. This level is not clearly defined in literature, but it reflects the concept that children must be confident, competent, accepted, valued and at ease in normal, age-appropriate, social and communicative situations (Carey 1990). The context-reduced and cognitively demanding language of school is very complex. If children do not have an adequate linguistic maturity, the efforts requested by school alone, even without the second language component, will be too demanding, and their motivation and desire to learn will be greatly diminished. This situation could negatively affect their social and emotional development which in turn would hinder their linguistic and cognitive development in both their first and second languages.

The Sufficient Communicative Interaction Principle

The sufficient communicative interaction principle refers to a concept earlier promoted by Vygotsky (1962) stating that language acquisition is dependent upon the interaction between a child and the environment (ego-world relationship). This concept was further

developed by another interactionist, Titone (1983), who suggested that language develops when a person interacts with the environment in all its components - physical, psychological, sociological and cultural. Moreover, underlying the principle that language development is dependent upon the quality and the quantity of language input, is the fact that a central function of language use is meaningful communication. Language acquisition for children is incidental to meaningful interaction. Young children rarely focus on language itself; rather, they focus on meaning and use language to communicate their intent. This implies that bilingual education should provide an interactive and communicative situational and contextual environment.

In conclusion, Cummins (1989) stressed the importance of taking into account these four principles - the additive bilingual enrichment principle, the interdependence principle, the threshold principle, and the sufficient communicative interaction principle - in evaluating current bilingual education practices because they provide the only basis for predicting academic outcomes.

Program Considerations

There is a growing body of research underlying the importance of the following considerations regarding the early total French immersion program: French immersion parents' goals and concerns,

the suitability of French immersion for all children, and the development of bilingual literacy in a school context.

French Immersion Parents' Goals and Concerns

French immersion parents continue to be the instigators and supporters of French immersion programs. For most of them, enrolling their child in an early total French immersion program is a major decision. This decision is made after they have carefully examined all the educational options offered to their children, and after they have analyzed what they consider important factors regarding bilingual education. Their major goal is to allow their children to receive all the benefits of a regular educational program as well as the bonus of bilingualism.

McEachern (1980) and Brassard (1990) mentioned that factors influencing a decision to enroll in a French immersion program are based on parents' personal attitudes, satisfactory answers regarding their legitimate concerns about bilingual education, and their analysis and rejection of common perpetrated myths or false information regarding such education. Moreover, when parents consider French immersion for their children, they are concerned with the overall growth of their children in the program.

More specifically to Alberta, Brassard (1990) added that attitudes regarding socio-political issues such as official bilingualism,

the necessity for children to learn French, and the separation of Quebec were also influential factors in parents' decision to choose French immersion for their child.

McEachern identified three major concerns parents have regarding bilingual education. One of these concerns is the development of their children's first language when a second language is the language of instruction. Parents want the reassurance that learning in a second language will not be detrimental to the development of their children's first language. A second concern is the feeling of inadequacy in helping their children with school work. Because most parents of children enrolled in French immersion do not speak French, they are concerned that they will not be able to help and participate in their children's learning experiences and they fear that they will not be able to monitor their children's progress in the program. A third concern is a perceived risk of limited communication between their child and the teacher. Parents wonder if their children are expected to function in French from the first day at school to fulfill all their needs. What happens to the child who does not understand when the teacher talks, or what happens to the child who cannot use French to communicate?

Another concern not discussed in the McEachern study, but encountered by this researcher in her dealings with parents of grade one French immersion students, is one regarding their child's ability to read and write like their peers who are in English programs when put in social situations outside the school context. Parents wonder

what happens to children's self-esteem when they see their friends read in English and they themselves cannot perform such a task.

In addition to concerns, parents have to deal with some myths surrounding the suitability of French immersion education for all students (McEachern 1980, Brassard 1990). Some of the most common myths are: French immersion is only for students with high academic ability or above average intelligence; French immersion is not for students with specific language or learning disabilities; French immersion is not for students from lower socioeconomic backgrounds; a child's achievement in English and other school subjects must suffer when a large proportion of school time is spent learning in French; mental confusion will result from the necessity to think through two languages; a child's spontaneity and power of creative thinking will be stunted.

Studies conducted by Bruck (1984), Genesee (1987) and Cummins (1989) have refuted these myths and concluded that French immersion is an effective form of education for students with diverse learner characteristics and from different kinds of communities. Success in French immersion is more dependent on affective, attitudinal, and motivational characteristics of children, than on academic and socioeconomic factors.

In conclusion, McEachern and Brassard pointed out that parents' attitude regarding the desirability of bilingualism and their confidence in their child's ability to be successful cognitively,

emotionally and socially are the most important factors in their decision to enroll and to keep their child in a French immersion program.

The Suitability of French Immersion for All Students

It has to be recognized that learning in a school context has some limitations. Cummins (1989) argued that there is no more reason to expect French immersion programs to be the best possible educational programs for all children than there is to expect regular English programs to be. Over the last fifteen years, researchers have expressed several points of view regarding the suitability of French immersion for all students.

Referring to enrolling children in French immersion, Bruck (1978) indicated that children with language disabilities can benefit from and learn in French immersion programs. She affirmed that children should not be excluded from participating in the program merely because it is felt that their first language development is poor.

Regarding the issue of students experiencing difficulties in a French immersion program, Cummins (1979) said that children who remain in French immersion programs despite academic difficulties progress just as well in academic and cognitive skills as those who transfer to an English program.

Pertaining to the withdrawal of children from French immersion, Bruck (1984) found that affective, attitudinal and motivational characteristics appeared to be the primary predictors of program departure. She indicated that transfer of a student experiencing difficulties in a French immersion program does not necessarily result in academic, linguistic or affective improvement. It is important to indicate that second language education does not necessarily contribute to poor levels of academic achievement; rather, achievement is associated primarily with individual differences in psychological functioning. Similarly, Genesee (1987) said that students should not be transferred from French immersion, because it deprives them of the benefits of intensive French language learning. Transferring students out of French immersion may also have immediate negative effects on the transferred students' self-perception.

In 1988, Hayden suggested that the decision to switch children from a French immersion to an English program depended on the interrelatedness of several factors. Nevertheless, she found that difficulty with language arts was the primary reason for removing children from the French immersion program. However, what was considered success in language arts would appear to have been measured by other children's successes rather than by the child's own developmental growth. Hayden concluded that all children could learn a second language; whether all could learn this second

language through the medium of academics in a school setting was still open to question.

Although there are some concerns about the suitability of French immersion programs for all children, there is a consensus among most researchers that French immersion is a viable educational alternative. The fact that children can experience difficulties in a French immersion program just as children do in an English program cannot be eliminated. Wiss (1987) found that when deficits in cognitive and academic skills are evident in English, they are also evident in French. Since it is already known that students could experience difficulties with learning, it is necessary to concentrate on the teaching process as a means of responding to the needs of those students. Furthermore, difficulties with learning in a bilingual context should be addressed by providing appropriate support programs for the development of cognitive, academic and social skills.

The Development of Literacy Skills in a Bilingual Context

Introduction to formal literacy is an important academic activity at the grade one level. At that level, a child's success is mainly measured in terms of literacy skills development. Literacy development is the process by which children acquire the ability to read and write. Research studies on reading in first and second languages (Hayden R., Fagan W., Brailsford A., 1991; Williams J.,

Snipper G. C., 1990; Malicky G., Fagan W., Norman C., 1988; Hayden, 1985; Genesee F.,1979; Cziko, G., 1978) revealed that reading can be approached from a variety of perspectives. On the one hand, reading can be viewed as a bottom-up cognitive process where the starting point is letters, moving up to words, to sentences, and to meaning. On the other hand, reading can be viewed as a psycholinguistic process by which logical relationships in the form of mental models are matched with words that convey the meaning of those relationships. More recently, reading is viewed as interactive process involving both top-down and bottom-up processes (Williams & Snipper, 1990). Consequently, it is evident that teachers' preferred reading paradigm will influence the way formal reading is introduced to children.

In the last decade, in the Alberta context, English schools have favored top-down or interactive paradigms over the bottom-up reading paradigm. Sight vocabulary and phonics instruction, asking readers to construct meaning from recognizing words or decoding them independently from context, has been replaced by a whole-language, literature-based approach where meaning is constructed linking past experiences with words in context, integrating listening, speaking, reading, writing and viewing skills. More recently, this movement emphasized that meaning does not reject the importance of language practice but rather uses language practice in the service of meaning.

French immersion schools have also been regarding reading as an integrated interactive process involving readers' knowledge of the world and their language knowledge in interaction with a text representing a writer's message. However, while texts presented in a child's first language reflect familiar semantic and syntactic use of a language, texts presented in a child's second language (at a time when the second language is very limited) display several structural properties as well as semantic and syntactic use of a language unknown to the child. A limited knowledge of the second language limits the negotiation of meaning between the child's knowledge of the world and a text written in a second language. Consequently, learning to read in a second language presents a major challenge.

In 1973, Goodman suggested that given the nature of reading, "teaching" reading should capitalize on a child's natural ability and facility with language. In 1985, Hayden stated that a successful reader is a child who has realized that reading is meaningful - "those black squiggles on the page have some correspondence to situations or objects in the real world". She also pointed out that asking children to learn how to read in their "very limited" second language was problematic because it was asking children to respond as if they had the prior linguistic knowledge of a member of the second language group.

Moreover, in 1988, Malicky and Norman stated that learning to read in one language should not be treated as a task separate from learning to read in another. In 1989, Cummins suggested that the

approach to early language arts in French immersion should be holistic and that instruction should relate to children's experiences and not focus on isolated components of the language. In the same vein, Hayden, Fagan & Brailsford (1991) advocated that literacy development in French immersion should not occur in a haphazard fashion, but rather be the result of planning behaviour and the execution of specific strategies accounting for the first and second languages of children.

Summary

In this chapter, research has been examined and reported. Some issues found in the literature gave a direction to this study. Achievement outcomes, effective bilingual education program delivery principles, and some program considerations regarding early total French immersion gave a focus to the interview questionnaire developed to investigate the experiences of early total French immersion teachers at the grade one level delivering a curriculum in French to students who are learning the language.

Conceptual Framework

The research literature on French immersion programs revealed the complexity of bilingual education in a school context. The credibility and viability of French immersion programs revolve

around teaching practices that reflect an understanding of: the customer's goals and concerns; some effective bilingual program principles, and some considerations with respect to the development of bilingualism in a school context.

Assumptions about the nature of French immersion programs, second language teaching and second language learning are at the centre of how teachers interact with students and what they communicate to parents and administrators . These assumptions are at the basis of their decisions regarding teaching/learning activities and monitoring/evaluating learning progress in their classroom. Brown (1990) suggests that:

> "Any language teacher must possess some sort of language learning theory (or amalgam of theories) which underpins what he does in the classroom, even if this theory is very primitive, for example a belief that learners will learn through constant repetition and word memorization. At its crudest level, then, this teaching theory may be based on a collection of "beliefs" cobbled together over the years, with little or no empirical or experimental support. The more sophisticated teacher, while he will no doubt still hold beliefs, will also have tried to evolve some reasoned rationale, a means of connecting his understanding of language learning with his pedagogical actions, informed by experience, reading and discussion." (p. 86)

What kind of methodology, teaching style, teacher-learner, teacher-parent and teacher-administrator communication they regard as desirable is based on teachers' understanding of complex variables involved at the grade one level of an early total French immersion program.

Making explicit the experiences of grade one early total French immersion teachers delivering a curriculum in French to students who are learning the language is the focus of this study. Methodology used to obtain information will be described in Chapter III.

CHAPTER III

THE RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The purpose of this study was to investigate the experiences of grade one early total French immersion teachers delivering a curriculum in French to students who are learning the language. This chapter describes the chosen procedure and how the study was carried out.

Research design

This study, descriptive in nature, was based on an interpretive paradigm. Its purpose was to describe and make explicit teachers' experiences at the grade one level in an early total French immersion program from a French immersion teacher's perspective, and was characterized by a concern for that individual. As described by Cohen and Manion (1989), "the central endeavour in the context of the interpretive paradigm is to understand the subjective world of human experience" (p. 38). According to them, an interpretive researcher "begins with the individual and sets out to understand his interpretation of the world around him" (p. 39). The aim of this research paradigm is not to verify a theory or to code behaviours according to set categories, but rather to establish a comprehensive account for human and social behaviour

Data for this study was gathered in the form of a structured interview with open-ended questions. A direct verbal interaction between the interviewer and an interviewee was viewed as the best way to access what French immersion teachers thought and had to say about their experiences. According to Tuckman (1988), the interview makes it possible to measure what a person knows, likes or dislikes and thinks. The structured-interview allows control of the nature of the problem under investigation, while the open-ended questions allows for maximum freedom in the answers.

Care was taken in developing the structure of the interview to respect the following principles elaborated by Skager-Weinberg (1971): 1) attention was given to awaken an interest so as to catch the interviewee's attention; 2) questions were developed to move from the simple to the complex; 3) sudden insertion of questions dealing with personal information was avoided; 4) if some questions were perceived as embarrassing or difficult to answer, an opportunity was given to the interviewee to explain his/her point of view even if this was not part of the study, and 5) transitions between categories of questions were clear and easy.

Research questionnaire

The questionnaire consisted of fifty-seven items which dealt with the following ten categories: school and teacher background information, planning for teaching, teaching, evaluation of student learning, communication with students, communication with colleagues and school administration, communication with parents, success, concerns, and other considerations. The questionnaire (See the Appendix) was developed in French to respect the language of communication used in the French immersion program.

Pilot Study

Once the questionnaire for the interview was developed, two grade one teachers not involved in the study were identified for piloting purposes. Piloting the questionnaire allowed the researcher to become familiar with the instrument, to verify its appropriateness and to consider recommendations for changes. These recommendations were discussed with the thesis advisor and modifications were made to improve the instrument.

Selection of Respondents

A letter was sent to the superintendents of Edmonton and surrounding school jurisdictions requesting their permission to solicit the participation of their grade one early total French immersion teachers in the study.

After receiving a positive response from the contacted school jurisdictions, a second request was made to the principals of potential schools for the study. Once a positive response was received at that level, eleven teachers were selected to best represent the population according to the context of their school program delivery: single, dual, or multi-track school. Eleven teachers were then invited to take part in the study and asked to participate in an interview

Data Collection

A personal interview was arranged by telephone with the eleven respondents. Each interview took place at the interviewee's preferred location. Interviewees were given the choice of having the interview conducted in English or in French. All interviews were recorded and transcribed for further analysis.

Data Analysis

The data gathered during the interviews was analyzed following a phenomenologigal approach as elaborated by Hycner (1985) who proposed the following guidelines:

1. Transcribe the interview noting non-verbal communication.
2. Bracket the researcher's meaning and interpretations to allow for comprehension of the interviewee's communication.
3. Listen for a sense of the whole.
4. Delineate units of general meaning.
5. Delineate units relevant to the research question.
6. Verify units of relevant meaning with other researchers.
7. Eliminate redundancies.
8. Cluster units of relevant meaning.
9. Determine themes forming clusters of meaning.
10. Write a summary of interviews.
11. Return to participants with summary and themes.
12. Modify themes and summary.
13. Identify general and unique themes.
14. Contextualize themes.
15. Write a composite summary.

Finally, the categories were analyzed with reference to the two research questions. These were:

1. What is teaching at the grade one level of an early total French immersion program?

2. What do grade one early total French immersion teachers think about their teaching experience in the program?

The questionnaire's ten categories served as a framework for reporting the data. This framework permitted the researcher to report the experiences of grade one early total French immersion teachers delivering a curriculum in French to learners who are learning the language.

Ethical Considerations

Before consent to participate in the study was solicited, a research proposal was designed and submitted to a University ethics review committee for approval. Once approval was received, informed consent was solicited and obtained at three different levels: first, from the superintendents of the school jurisdictions, second, from the school principals, and third from the teachers participating in the

study. A letter of information outlining the study's purpose and procedure was sent to all interested parties. The dignity and privacy of all individuals involved in the study was maintained by assuring confidentiality. Participants were allowed to withdraw from the study at any given time. Information obtained was treated in a confidential manner and did not point to a specific school or teacher during discussions with different interested parties and in the final written report.

CHAPTER IV

ANALYSIS OF QUESTIONNAIRE RESULTS

Introduction

The following results are based on the responses of eleven grade one early total French immersion teachers from eight schools in four school jurisdictions in Edmonton and its surrounding areas. Data reporting and analyzing follow the questionnaire's ten categories which are: background information, planning, teaching, evaluation of student learning, communication with students, communication with colleagues and administrators, communication with parents, success, concerns, and other considerations.

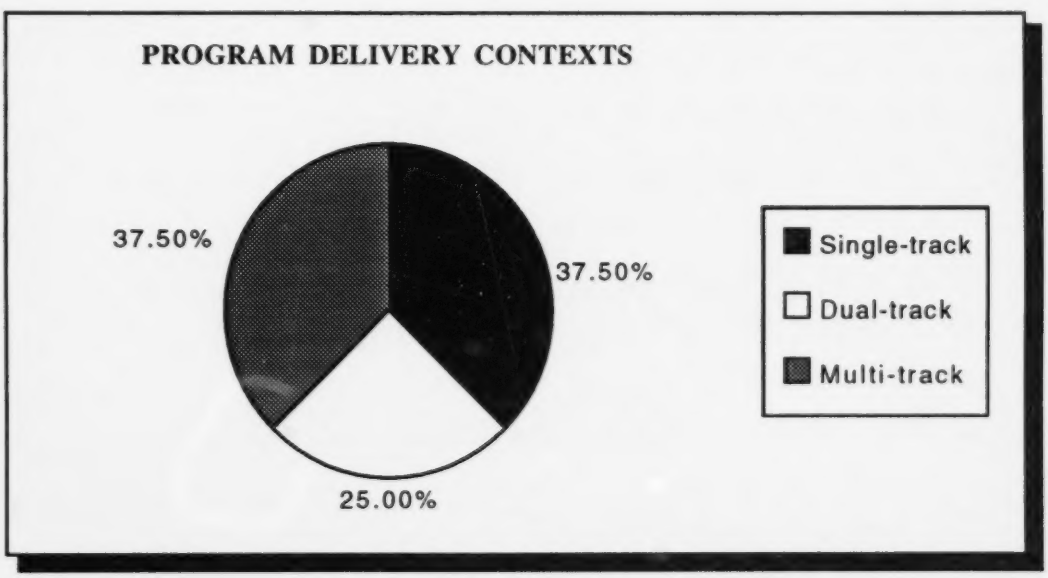
Background Information

Background information data have been classified into two categories: schools and teachers. These categories have been further divided into sub-categories.

Background data pertaining to the schools have been classified into two sub-categories: the context of French immersion program delivery, and the range of grade levels offered at each school.

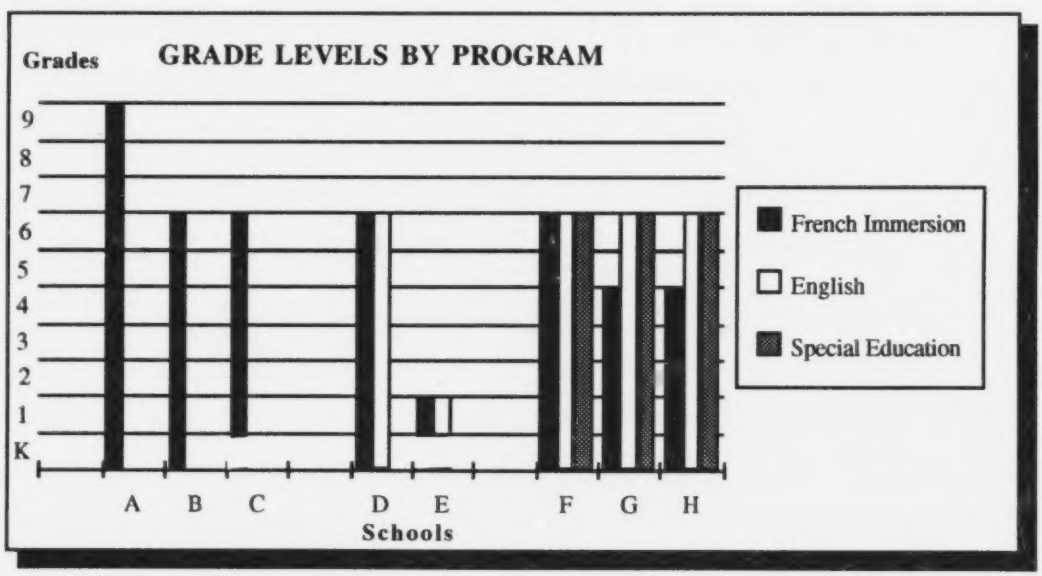
In this study, there were three different French immersion program delivery contexts. Three of the schools were immersion centres or single-track schools where the early total French immersion program was the only program offered. Two schools were dual-track schools where both the French immersion and an English program were offered. The other three schools were multi-track schools where an English program for students with special needs was offered in addition to the French immersion and the English programs. (See Figure 1).

Figure 1



There was a variety in the range of grade levels offered at each school. In the three single-track schools, French immersion was offered in one school from kindergarten to grade nine, in the other school from kindergarten to grade six, and in a third school from grade one to grade six. In the two dual-track schools, one school offered both French immersion and English programs from kindergarten to grade six, and the other school offered only the grade one level in English and in French. In the three multi-track schools, the English program and a program for students with special needs were offered from kindergarten to grade six in all the schools, while the French immersion program was offered from kindergarten to grade six in one school, and from kindergarten to grade four in the other two schools. (See Figure 2).

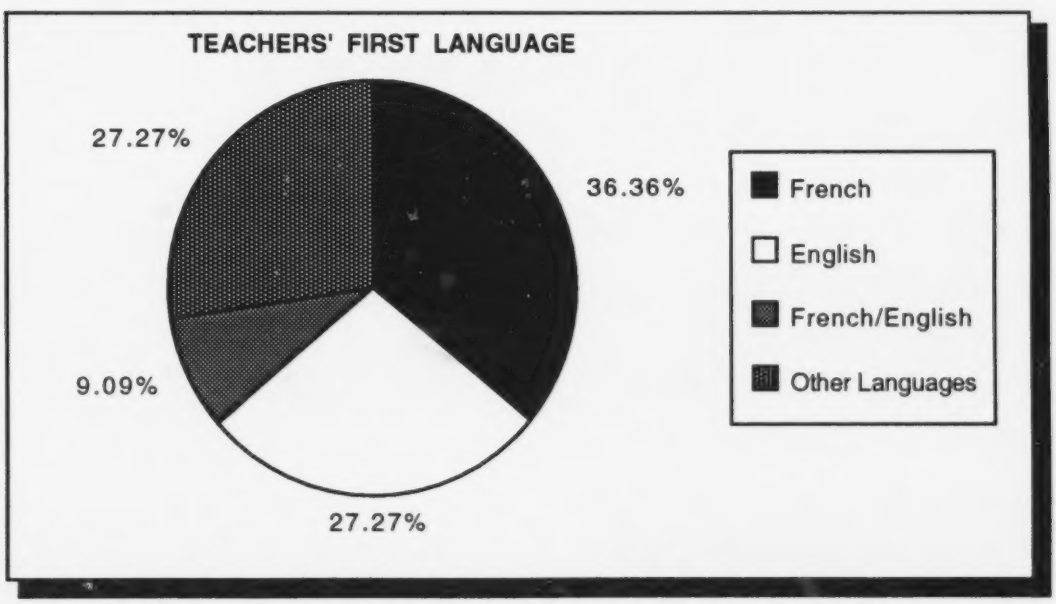
Figure 2



Background information data pertaining to teachers have been classified into six sub-categories: first language, second language, preferred language of communication, teacher training, and teaching experience.

Five different languages were identified as the respondents' respective first language. Four respondents identified French, three of them identified English, one respondent learned French and English simultaneously, and the other three respondents respectively identified Polish, German and Finnish. (See Figure 3).

Figure 3



When asked when they started learning a second language, two respondents answered, at home before entering school, four were introduced to a second language in elementary school, three in secondary school, one at the university, and one when she started teaching. As for their preferred language of communication, two respondents identified French, four English and five mentioned both languages. It is noteworthy to point out that although four teachers mentioned English as their preferred language of communication, all interviewees chose to communicate in French during the interview.

Among the eleven respondents, five pursued their elementary and secondary schooling in English, and six respondents pursued theirs in French. Two pursued their university studies in English, five in French, and four in both languages. The respondents studied in six different provinces in Canada: Alberta, Manitoba, New Brunswick, Nova Scotia, Ontario, and Quebec; and one respondent was educated in Germany. Most respondents for whom French was not their first language participated in immersion experiences varying from a few weeks during the summer to a full year, in Quebec or in France, in addition to their formal schooling.

Nine respondents had a Baccalaureate in Education with a specialization either in early Childhood or elementary education. One respondent had a specialization in special education, and one respondent had a specialization in secondary education. Among the eleven respondents, one participant had a master's degree. With respect to teaching in a French immersion program, four respondents

took some specialized immersion training at the Faculté Saint-Jean; one respondent took similar training in Ontario. One respondent had some training in second language methodology, and the other five respondents did not have any formal training either in teaching through the medium of a second language or in teaching a second language.

Respondents' total years of teaching experience varied from two to twenty-one. Experience in the French immersion program varied from two to seventeen years, and experience at the grade one level, in a French immersion program, varied from two to eleven years.

Discussion of Results

The results presented show that the early total French immersion program is offered in a variety of contexts: from single, to dual, to multi-track settings. In a single track-school, all teachers are French immersion teachers while in dual or multi-track schools, French immersion teachers are in the minority. These contexts create an environment that impacts on teachers' living and working conditions. The most important impact mentioned in literature is the influence of dual and multi-track settings on first, the stress caused for principal and staffs regarding a need to divide priorities between French, English and other programs (Tétrault 1984), and second, the

stress caused for teachers regarding their linguistic and cultural realities (Gagné 1991).

There is also a variety in the range of grade levels offered in different schools. This range creates a further need to divide priorities between different age level specific needs.

In this study, thirty percent of the respondents were French native speakers, and all other teachers demonstrated a native-like French proficiency during the interviews. Although some teachers did not select French as their preferred language of communication, all of them chose to communicate in French during the interview. This choice suggests that variables such as context and situation strongly influence language selection. Among the eleven teachers, five had teacher training in French immersion education, while six developed their expertise after being assigned to teaching in a French immersion program.

In a French immersion program, the dominant function of language behavior is communication, and language learning is learning to communicate (Safty 1989). Thus the teacher's French language proficiency and professional training should be fundamental aspects of the program. Results from this study suggest that French language proficiency is perceived as an essential attribute, while French immersion teacher training is not perceived as a necessary condition for staffing French immersion programs. While not underestimating the value of expertise based on practice,

intuition and common sense, the danger facing teachers without formal second language teacher training is that many find themselves at the mercy of resources which then determine methodology and submissive to all administrative decisions affecting the teaching and learning conditions of the program.

Finally, this study shows that although there is one name for the program - early total French immersion, program delivery at the school level "operates organizationally not as an integrated system but as a set of parallel modes connected by name and amount of FSL instruction" (Burns & Olson, 1989, p. 505).

Planning

Data reporting for part one encompassed respondents' answers to the first eleven questions of the study. Starting with part 2, respondents' data will be presented following the interview guide. Thus, Part two - Planning, starts with question #12.

12. What subjects do you teach? In what language?

It is common practice for all grade one French immersion teachers to teach all their subjects in French. However, there are a few exceptions where a particular subject is taught in English by the same teacher or in English by a specialist teacher. For example, religion was taught in English by the elementary homeroom teacher of all the Catholic schools participating in this study; music was taught in English by a specialist in two schools; and physical education was taught in English by a specialist teacher in one school.

13. How do you organize your program's objectives during the year?

All teachers mentioned using a thematic approach for planning their program's objectives. Most teachers derived their themes from the French Language Arts basic resource recommended by Alberta

Education, and some teachers mentioned adding themes derived from students' interests. One teacher mentioned occasionally developing themes based on the Social Studies program. Seven teachers mentioned integrating other subjects into their themes. Teachers who practiced integration of subjects mentioned the inclusion of Social Studies and Sciences in most of their themes and an effort to integrate Mathematics and Health when appropriate and possible.

14. How do you choose activities to attain your program's objectives?

All teachers mentioned the importance of context in the planning of activities. Because their grade one students were not familiar with the language required to learn different subjects, teachers emphasized the need for activities that generated vocabulary before dealing with concepts. Activities had to be experiential (hands-on) and start with concrete and familiar topics. Language had to be strongly supported by non-verbal clues. Support such as illustrations, pictures, drawings, gestures, actions, and mime always had to accompany teacher's language in order to facilitate comprehension for children. Favorite activities to encourage children's comprehension and production were: creating language charts, singing songs, playing games, reading, writing, using manipulatives, drama and discussions.

One teacher mentioned the need for a balance between visual, auditory and kinesthetic activities to suit the needs of students' different learning styles.

15. With regard to the development of French, do you determine students' French language proficiency objectives?

Teachers referred to the French Language Arts program of studies when determining students' French language proficiency objectives. Many said that children's French language proficiency varied from one child to the other, and from year to year. Some children were better and faster learners than others.

Some teachers also mentioned that their expectations were higher than the Department's expectations. There were no expectations regarding phonics in the program of studies and some teachers have created their own expectations regarding this element which they felt was an important aspect of language development. Experienced teachers mentioned that their expectations were higher now than they were when they started teaching. "Je me suis rendue compte que plus on en montre, plus les enfants sont capables de produire."

The following is a composite summary of grade one French language proficiency objectives as described by teachers.

At the grade one level, children are able to (with teacher's assistance if necessary):

Use the French language to:

Recognize sounds;
Understand words and phrases orally;
Understand basic routine commands;
Ask questions to fulfill their basic needs;
Express their feelings and ideas;
Discuss with friends;
Recognize written words and phrases;
Decode words;
Write.

Topics:

In dealing with familiar, simple, concrete, topics.

Contexts:

In taught, prepared, guided and structured contexts.

Language level:

Letters,
Simple syllables,
Words,
Simple sentences,
Short stories.

Language accuracy:

Good pronunciation;
Complete sentences;
Correct basic simple grammar (program of studies);
Correct basic structure (program of studies);
Some English words acceptable (for some teachers).

Key moments:

All teachers recognized that language followed a developmental process and that children developed their language proficiency at their own rhythm. Key moments mentioned by teachers were December, and May, simply because these two months represented approximately the middle and the end of the school-year.

16. Do you plan alone or with other teachers?

Teachers in dual or multi-track schools were the only grade one French immersion teacher in the school. They would have liked to plan with other teachers but found that when they planned with grade one English teachers, they had to translate everything into French or adapt the activities to suit the needs of their students. One teacher mentioned planning a special unit with a grade four French immersion teacher. Another teacher mentioned planning with the librarian (who spoke French), when they both developed the same theme at the same time.

In immersion centres or single-track schools, teachers reported planning mostly alone, but discussing and sharing themes and short-term and long-term plans with other grade one French immersion teachers. One teacher mentioned planning with kindergarten French immersion teachers.

17. Do you have sufficient resources to plan for instruction?

There was a noticeable difference regarding the availability of resources for planning between teachers in immersion centers and those in dual and multi-track schools.

In the three immersion centers, teachers were satisfied with the quality and quantity of resources available for planning. They mentioned however, that there was always a need for more and newer resources.

In the two dual-track schools, teachers mentioned having the guides, the recommended basic resources, and some supplementary resources for the program, but felt that the quality and the quantity of resources in the library were not adequate for the program. Their satisfaction mainly relied on the arrival of better basic resources, because without them, they had to create their own materials.

In the three multi-track schools, one teacher mentioned having the basic resources for the program but felt that she had what was needed to teach the program only because she created her own resources and because she had contacts in Quebec who could send her what she needed. In all multi-track schools, there was a major complaint regarding the lack of good French literature in the library. Teachers identified a need for books with interesting stories for students, not only books with pictures.

Two teachers mentioned the need for better basic resources for the Science and Music programs.

18. Do you have the necessary support from your school and your district to realize your objectives?

Support for teachers was different depending on the school context.

In single-track schools, teachers mentioned receiving full support from their school and district administrators for their program.

In dual-track schools, teachers mentioned receiving the support they needed for their program. They also mentioned that conditions had improved over the years.

In one of the three multi-track schools, the teacher deplored the lack of support from the school administration. In her opinion, her administrators did not understand French and completely ignored the program. "La direction fait semblant que l'immersion n'existe pas. Je donne un exemple. Le (la) professeur(e) de maternelle s'est portée volontaire pour faire la publicité du programme d'immersion lors de la soirée des parents. Le directeur lui a dit qu'il s'en occupait. Rien n'a été fait. Aucune publicité n'a été faite pour le programme d'immersion." In the second multi-track school, the teacher mentioned having what she needed only because of parental support and parents' advocacy for the French immersion program. The teacher in the third multi-track school mentioned that she did not have all the support she needed but noticed that conditions had improved since she started working at that school.

19. What are the difficulties encountered by grade one French immersion teachers with regard to planning for instruction?

Teachers mentioned that planning for a grade one French immersion program was very complex. Experience, program objectives, understanding of child and language development, and appropriate resources were identified as some critical interrelated elements of good planning.

Respondents felt that experience or help from an experienced teacher was crucial to effective planning because a teacher had to

know all the subjects' objectives to be taught, how to integrate and sequence them into coherent learning activities that respect child development, and know how to teach them in a language that students were learning (second language pedagogy).

With respect to program objectives, some teachers felt that there were too many objectives to cover for children learning through the medium of a second language. Teachers mentioned that it was challenging to sequence objectives because it was always difficult to predict when children would have the language needed to deal with specific academic concepts. Many subjects' objectives were hard to introduce before Christmas due to children's insufficient language proficiency. As a result, some teachers mentioned having to hurry after Christmas.

In addition to the challenge of meeting all the program's objectives, one teacher felt that the program's emphasis on oral language objectives was not the best approach for all children. She expressed a need to integrate kinesthetic objectives into the program. As well, some teachers felt that learning was so dependent on children's abilities and rhythm that it was hard for them to judge what was enough and what was too much in many situations. It was specially hard for beginning teachers to know what to expect from children in terms of understanding, speaking, reading and writing in French.

Teachers also mentioned the difficulty of finding appropriate supplementary resources for the program. They claimed that basic resources recommended by Alberta Education did not offer the quantity and the variety of learning experiences needed to develop academic concepts and second language proficiency as mandated by the program. A grade one French immersion teacher had to know where to find additional resources, adapt them, or create them to suit students' concept and second language development and their different learning styles. Immersion teachers' major challenge regarding resources was to match students' interest level and resources' language level. Teachers felt that the language used in age-appropriate materials was often too difficult for students learning the language. A second challenge for some teachers was to stretch their budget because no special financial consideration was given to their program to reflect the additional costs associated with the usually higher price of French resources.

Discussion of Results

The results of the interview highlight the complexity of planning for grade one French immersion. Effective planning for instruction should take into account teachers' competency, district and school support, well developed programs of studies, appropriate resources, suitable teaching and learning activities.

When planning, French immersion teachers have to integrate two major interrelated components which are the development of literacy in a second language and the learning of content through that second language. To be efficient, teachers have to know all their grade one French immersion program objectives which are all regular grade one subject objectives and their French Language Arts objectives. They have to know how to teach academic subjects and know how to teach them through the medium of a second language. When they plan, they have to select and sequence objectives to reflect the progressive nature of students' concept development and their second language development along with the specific language demands of different subjects' content objectives. They have to integrate specific language and content objectives in a coherent manner so that they are meaningful to children.

In order to achieve their goal, most teachers use a thematic approach based on either their French Language Arts basic resource, or occasionally based on another subject such as Social Studies or Sciences, or on students' interests. Some teachers integrate other subjects such as Social Studies and Sciences into their themes. As most recommended basic resources are not developed according to an explicit integrative philosophy, nor according to an explicit second language teaching approach, teachers have to find, adapt or create their own teaching and learning resources. Furthermore, they have to identify teaching and learning activities that allow their students to develop concepts in a variety of academic subjects, while developing their French literacy through some explicit teaching of

the language and through some implicit language teaching by teaching academic concepts through the medium of French.

A common challenge to all French immersion teachers is to find resources that match student's interest level and their language proficiency level. At the local level, program delivery context has a noticeable impact on teachers' satisfaction regarding the accessibility and availability of resources for their program. Teachers in single-track schools are generally satisfied with the basic and supplementary resources available to them and with the quantity and the quality of resources available to students in the library. Teachers in dual-track schools are satisfied with the availability of basic resources but have a need for more supplementary resources for them and more and better resources in the library for students. Teachers in multi-track schools express strong dissatisfaction with the availability of resources for themselves and for students, and more specifically, with the quality and the quantity of library resources available for students.

School context is also perceived as having an impact on teachers' satisfaction regarding the support they receive at the school level. From a feeling of full support in single-track schools to a feeling of being ignored in multi-track schools, all teachers mentioned the importance of school administrators' support for the success of the program.

At the level of program of studies, teachers feel that the Department's program objectives do not always reflect the reality of their experience and do not facilitate their teaching in a French immersion setting. The fact that French immersion program objectives are exactly the same as the English program objectives, (except for minor changes in Social Studies), with an added component of French Language Arts objectives, is problematic. It leaves solely to teachers the responsibility for delivering translated provincial program objectives developed for first language students to students working with these objectives through the medium of a second language. Therefore the adequacy of a coherent French immersion program varies proportionally with the competence of the individual teachers and the support they receive at the local level.

The results of the interviews reveal that the present situation has created different teaching realities based on boards', administrators' and individual teachers' beliefs, and their respective understanding of second language pedagogy, child development, and teaching in an immersion context. The following examples demonstrate the diverse and sometimes contradictory resulting teaching practices. Some teachers feel that the French Language Arts objectives do not encompass elements that they believe are important such as phonics, so they add and emphasize this component. A few teachers have their own student expectations because they feel that the Department's language objectives are not adequate. Conversely, some teachers feel that the Department's expectations are too high and say that some of their students cannot

meet all objectives by the end of the year. More experienced teachers expect more from students now than they did when they started teaching. Other teachers feel a distinct uncertainty as to the level of language proficiency to be expected from students. Many teachers encounter difficulties with sequencing language objectives and timing subject objectives.

These results strongly indicate a need for clearer directions from the Department as to how to balance the curriculum to take into account academic content and language objectives. The program of studies should also address program expectations in relation to students' limited language proficiency in September and their progressive language development during the year.

These study findings also highlight the impact of decisions made at the provincial and local levels on teachers. They reveal a need for strong curriculum and administration leadership for French immersion. Burns and Olson (1989) argue that while noteworthy gains have been achieved in French immersion, ad hoc current practices have to be remedied if the program was to reach its full potential. They theorize that "What one might expect from organizational theory is that planning would begin at the ministerial level, so that there would be a gross sorting out of a finite set of options to standardize possible offerings by respective boards." (p. 504). As well, McGillivray (1984) points out that problems have to be anticipated at the local level when trying to encompass French immersion with other programmes. He argues that the best way to

support the French immersion program administratively is to consider it a "regular" program where children deserve at least equal services to those offered in an English program.

> "Remedial, music and library specialists are not usually capable of serving in both languages, and one programme will be deprived of these services. Budgets must be stretched, because French books are more expensive. Supervision of programmes and staff in two languages becomes very difficult for some principals. In fact, the two programmes are not compatible, and they co-exist with difficulty, particularly in schools covering classes from kindergarten to grade 6. The solution is administratively simple and politically difficult - separate the two programmes and create an immersion centre, offering only the immersion programme. In such a school, the staff, the programme, and the budget are all devoted to immersion only." (p. 27).

As found by Tétrault (1984) and Lamarre (1989), the results of this study reiterate that school administrators' understanding of the French immersion program and their commitment and support are essential to the success of French immersion. Considering the results of this study, this researcher would argue that it is even more crucial in school jurisdictions where dual or multi-track programming is mandated by the Board.

Teaching

20. What is it the easiest subject to teach? Why?

Seven of the eleven teachers said that Mathematics was the easiest subject to teach. The main reason was that in the beginning, students could function and succeed with a minimum of language. Teachers also found that the visual similarity of numbers in French and in English facilitated the learning of the subject. Orally, the sounds were different, but with visual support, most students learned numbers easily. Mathematics became more difficult when the French language played a greater role in problem solving.

Another reason mentioned by most teachers was an easy accessibility to resources. Any concrete objects could become Mathematics manipulatives used to teach experientially following a concrete to abstract learning continuum.

Teachers also mentioned that children's familiarity with basic mathematical concepts was a good basis for building new concepts. Some teachers observed a pattern in the way children learned Mathematics. In the beginning, children mentally did Mathematics in English, then they translated to French, and finally they learned and did Mathematics in French.

Three teachers mentioned that French was the easiest subject to teach because they felt that French was present in all the subjects; that French Language Arts themes were interesting for children, and because they liked to teach it.

One teacher mentioned Social Studies and Health because these subjects were not introducing new concepts for children. The concepts presented were an interpretation of their daily life.

21. What is the most difficult subject to teach? Why?

Half of the teachers contended that some formal aspects of French literacy were difficult to teach. One teacher was concerned with the teaching of writing in French. She wanted children to write about their own ideas, and in the beginning, these ideas came out in English. When she wrote them in French for the children, she felt that the product became her story and many children could not read it anymore. For her, the most important concept in writing was for children to understand that what people say orally is what can be seen written on paper. She felt that learning to write in a second language had to be structured and limited. She observed that in grade one, children could not be as creative with the French language as they could be with their first language. According to her, it was a crime not to allow children to be as creative as they could be. For her, there was a time for language development in French, but when it was time for creative writing, it was usually a mixture of English

and French. She felt that children became frustrated if they were too restrained by the constraints of a language they were learning and expected to use in writing right away. She acknowledged that the subject of literacy development in a second language was controversial. At this time in her career, she felt that her university teacher training in French immersion did not prepare her for teaching formal literacy in a second language.

Her concerns about how to teach reading and writing were not shared by another teacher for whom teaching how to read and write was simple. It had to begin first with letters and sounds, then with words before introducing children to sentences. She felt this was the only way that children learning to read in a second language could be successful.

For another teacher, teaching reading and writing in French was difficult. According to her experience, it took at least two to three months before children could start using French.

> "Les enfants en première année commencent à apprendre le français et ils ont de la difficulté à comprendre la langue. On leur demande de faire une phrase au moment où ils ne savent pas ce qu'est une phrase en anglais et ils ne comprennent pas le mot phrase en français. C'est très difficile. Ils ne peuvent pas structurer une phrase oralement en français."

This teacher had the experience of teaching reading and writing in English at the grade one level in a French immersion program in another province and found it much easier. In her former experience, children learned about sentences in English and learned how to read in English. When she moved here, she was surprised to find out that children were expected to learn to read in French. According to her, children did not know the language enough and did not have enough vocabulary to be introduced to formal reading in French. Consequently, many children did not know what they were reading when they had to learn to read in French. She felt that it was easier for children to learn to read in English, because they knew the language they were reading. They easily transferred their knowledge of reading in English to reading in French.

Another teacher found it difficult to teach subjects that required discussions like French or Social Studies, because she felt that children got lost in discussions due to their lack of proficiency in the language.

Two teachers mentioned Sciences because they felt that abstract concepts children did not have in their first language were hard to teach when children had a very limited second language proficiency.

For one teacher, Physical Education was hard to teach because of her personal lack of expertise in the subject. Finally, one teacher mentioned Mathematics because in her opinion, children did not

have the experience of connecting what they heard with what they saw. She believed that they needed many kinesthetic experiences before they could understand mathematical concepts.

22. Do you have the necessary resources to teach your program?

All teachers mentioned having the basic learning resources recommended by Alberta Education, and all of them mentioned having to supplement these resources to a certain degree with other commercial resources, or resources made by other teachers or themselves.

All teachers expressed a desire for more French reading and writing resources. One teacher mentioned that considering recent research on how children learn to read and write, there was a need for more French literature.

One teacher mentioned a need for more resources in Social Studies, and another teacher mentioned the lack of games and audio-visual resources for the French program.

Finally, one teacher mentioned the lack of real opportunities for her students to use French and expressed a desire of having access to some Francophone children to talk and play with her students.

23. What specific strategies do you use to teach children who do not understand the language?

Grade one French immersion teachers reported that they assumed children did not understand the French language at the beginning of the year. They explained that teaching in a second language had to be in context so that language experiences were as real and meaningful as possible. Language had to be constantly supported with visual aids. A grade one French immersion teacher had to show everything she was talking about. She had to explain with pictures and actions, repeat the same things many times, ask students to repeat, ask students to memorize, and had to create meaningful situations for students to use the language. Showing objects, gestures, actions, repetitions, drawings, illustrations, questions, games, songs, stories, mime, music, poems, books, working with a partner, in small groups or with the whole class were strategies used to teach and learn a second language.

When children did not seem to understand, teachers mentioned using a variety of teaching strategies such as observing, asking questions, explaining differently, re-explaining in English (a few words to the class or on a one to one basis), using other children as models, and demonstrations. Teachers also taught students strategies for learning a second language such as observing what other children were doing, guessing, asking questions, and trying something to see the reaction. Teachers observed that children

taught each other and translated for the ones who did not understand.

All teachers were very reluctant to use English because they felt that every time they did, they were diminishing students' exposure to French and consequently negatively affecting students' development of French proficiency. However, one teacher described having had the experience of working with a blind child in her class. For that child, visuals and actions did not help. She had an aide who translated everything she said in English. The blind child would memorize and remember. When the teacher said the same words again, the child knew what to do. For that teacher, this experience made her realize that no English at all was too radical -- sometimes it could help.

24. How do you encourage children to speak in French?

Surprisingly enough, teachers felt that positive reinforcement seemed to be all that was needed. Children were so eager to please the teacher and so eager to learn, that verbal and non-verbal encouragement, such as bravos, smiles, certificates, stickers, check marks, and candies did the trick. Teachers encouraged children to use French and children encouraged each other.

Teachers indicated that it was difficult to expect students to use French at the beginning of the year. Some teachers insisted on

students using French as soon as they thought that they were capable of doing so, while other teachers never insisted but always encouraged students to use French. Some teachers mentioned a progression in their expectations.

Strategies described by teachers to encourage children were: pretending not to understand English, asking the child to say it in French, repeating in French what the child had just said in English, extending children's answer by adding to what they had said, answering students while correcting their mistakes, asking children to repeat after the teacher, teaching them special non academic words such as "péter" (to fart). One teacher stated that choosing interesting themes and playing games encouraged children to talk.

Ultimately, teachers found that much perseverance was required. They reported that most children cooperated, but when there was a problem with a child refusing to use French, parents were called and motivation was discussed. Teachers worked with parents to identify the problem, and together they helped the child overcome his/her difficulties.

25. What do you do with children who have learning difficulties?

Some teachers claimed that the problem of students experiencing difficulties in the program was becoming an issue.

They observed that the new French immersion clientele presented different characteristics from those of the clientele who enrolled in the program fifteen years ago. At the inception of the program, children had an above average intelligence, and were coming from well-educated families strongly committed to the program. Nowadays, the French immersion population displays a greater range in children's intellectual abilities, in socioeconomic backgrounds, and in parental commitment to the program. In addition, most parents of children now enrolled in the program work outside the home and have limited time to spend with them. A major consequence noticed by some teachers was the decreasing quality and quantity of reading that parents did with their children at home.

One teacher mentioned that in her situation, there were more children with emotional problems than learning problems. These emotional problems affected learning, but could not be treated as learning problems.

While the main responsibility for managing the child's learning remained with the teacher, some schools offered additional support for children experiencing difficulties, while other schools did not.

Teachers described the following procedure when dealing with students experiencing difficulties.

The first steps were taken in the classroom. When a teacher noticed that a child was experiencing difficulties, there was first a

series of observations and efforts to help the child in the classroom itself. Then, the teacher worked with small groups of children or tried to help the child individually, while other students worked independently. One teacher mentioned that she tried to see the children's input system, how they learned, and then adjusted her teaching to their learning style. Another teacher mentioned creating a special group of weak students and working with them together. One teacher mentioned doing more phonics with students experiencing difficulties. Beside giving extra help herself, one teacher mentioned inviting grade two and four students to read to her children. Overall, most teachers mentioned adjusting their expectations for the students experiencing difficulties in order to reduce their stress level.

The second level of intervention was to inform parents and ask them if they could work with their child at home. One teacher mentioned that when parents helped in English at home, it helped the child in French at school. The child transferred what s/he learned from English to French. Despite their valuable contributions, some parents felt helpless in such situations and became very anxious about the success of their child in the program.

For many schools, the responsibility of helping students with difficulties ended after teachers and parents worked together to help the child. Those schools which offered additional support services activated a third level of intervention. Many scenarios or combination of scenarios were possible. In one scenario, the teacher

sent children experiencing difficulties to the resource room teacher who, first, after receiving approval from parents, tested children to diagnose their problems and then pulled them out of the classroom for a period of time during the week to help them overcome or develop strategies to deal with their problems. In another scenario, the teacher first tried to diagnose what was wrong, then discussed her concerns with the school resource room teacher or a district consultant who, after receiving permission from parents, tested the children (this service could be in English or French). A program was then designed (sometimes in collaboration with the teacher) for the teacher to help the child in the classroom. In another scenario, teachers had an aide who came to the classroom to work with children.

Teachers mentioned that most difficulties disappeared or were under control after proper attention was given to students. However, the final level of intervention remained in the hands of parents who, in consultation with the teacher and the special education teacher (when available), decided if their child should remain in the French immersion program. When no support was available at the school level, often the parents' decision was to remove the child from the program. In spite of additional support, some parents still chose to remove their child from the program hoping that the difficulties would disappear or be reduced in an English program.

One teacher mentioned that there were more students in need of help this year than there were last year. She felt that twenty-five

percent of her children needed some help during the year in order to be prepared for the grade two expectations the following year. One teacher mentioned that an average of two children quit the program every year after grade one. Reasons for dropping out of the program were varied, but were mainly directly or indirectly related to problems associated with learning to read.

Some teachers were concerned about the problems facing children switching out of the program after grade one because they felt that these children had not developed adequate reading and writing skills to move on to grade two in an English program.

One teacher mentioned that the present situation could change with the implementation of the program continuity concept now being introduced by Alberta Education into the elementary programming. According the teacher, this new philosophy will better respect children's development process and allow them to progress on a continuum basis over their elementary education. The stress of having all students attain the same predetermined objectives at the end of grade one could be removed.

Discussion of Results

Teachers have discussed their teaching experiences at the grade one level in French immersion with respect to three major interrelated areas: grade one academic subjects, formal literacy in

French, and interventions with children experiencing difficulties in the program.

Teachers claim that some academic subjects are easier to teach than others at the grade one French immersion level. For most teachers, Mathematics is the easiest subject to teach, whereas formal introduction to reading and writing in French is viewed as most difficult by many teachers.

Teachers find that the following characteristics make a subject easy to teach in a second language: resources are easily available and accessible; there are non-verbal similarities (i.e. numbers) inherent to the subject that are present in both French and English - this sameness in both languages serves as a bridge from the known in English to the unknown in French; the French language required to function is minimal at the beginning, and finally, concepts to be covered can be introduced experientially moving from concrete to abstract, and familiar to unfamiliar.

As for the most difficult subject to teach, some teachers strongly feel that the introduction of formal literacy in French is problematic. The difficulty with teaching reading and writing is associated with students' very limited French proficiency at the moment they are introduced to learning to read and write. It is interesting, however, to point out that while some teachers are concerned with this issue, other teachers are very satisfied with their

current practices. The perplexity of these opposite positions could lie in their definition of reading.

Results from this study show that teachers view reading and writing differently. For some, learning to read and write is described in those terms: "Dans certains livres il n'y a pas de phonétique. Les enfants doivent commencer à lire des phrases. Je suis désolée, mais on doit commencer avec des sons, des mots, et on passe aux phrases quand les enfants ont maîtrisé les mots pour formuler les phrases." Conversely, for others, learning to read and write was explained differently. "Le plus important pour moi, au début, c'est que l'enfant réalise que ce que l'on dit à l'oral est ce que l'on voit à l'écrit.." These different teachers' views of reading and writing reflect different reading theories.

Teachers who believe that reading and writing should be introduced starting with letters, then words, and then sentences, view reading as a bottom-up process. Their teaching practices emphasize phonics and sight vocabulary. As presented by Williams and Snipper (1990), such an approach compares reading to an adding machine. Children add individual letters and words to eventually obtain a total meaning. With a phonics approach, students pronounce the sounds of the letters of the alphabet and their different combinations in order to decode unknown words when reading.

According to Giasson (1990), the paradox of the effectiveness of decoding is that one can effectively teach decoding strategies that

have little relation with the way decoding will be used by students. Decoding rules are too complicated to be used by apprentices. At most, teaching decoding allows the reader to understand a basic principle, that there is a direct relation (up to a certain point) between oral language and written language. Once this principle is understood, the apprentice readers have to find strategies that will be efficient for them.

The drawbacks of the bottom-up theory are the implication that reading comprehension starts with words on a page, suggesting a direct correspondence between letters, sounds and words, words and meaning. In such an approach, reading proficiency is related to the number of words learned, and teaching practices focus on drilling sounds and words that are not necessarily introduced in a meaningful context, which in turn makes reading comprehension problematic.

Teachers who believe that teaching reading and writing should start with children's global experiences and literature view reading as a psycholinguistic game, "... by which the reader, a language user, reconstructs as best he can a message which has been encoded by a writer as a graphic display" (Goodman p. 135 cited in Ewart (1991)). These teachers question how they can ask children to apply their knowledge of the world to texts written in a language that is unfamiliar to them. Like Hayden (1985), they question the premise of this practice, because it presupposes that children at the grade one

level in French immersion can respond as if they had the prior linguistic knowledge of a member of the second language group.

This study shows that teachers who use a bottom up approach are satisfied with children's results. However researchers have found that a phonics approach gives results that seem superior to the ones achieved with other approaches during the first year, but came to a conclusion that this superior performance disappears by the end of grade two (Beck, 1984; Ehri, 1983; Perfetti & Curtis, 1986) in Williams & Snipper (1990). This practice, as interpreted in the hypothetical reading comprehension framework of Williams & Snipper (1990), places so much emphasis on short term and working memories that learners cannot easily access their long term memory to reach their schemata (if appropriate labels and schemata existed in their second language). At the extreme, this practice, as confirmed by one teacher in this study, can produce readers who can decode and pronounce words but who cannot understand what they read. Furthermore, this practice is by nature very structured and limits the quantity and quality of language that students are exposed to at the beginning of their experience with reading. It also limits the contribution of authentic literature in children's language development. Most importantly, one can question if this practice adequately prepares children for the academic expectations of a curriculum taught in a second language.

Referring to Cummin's underlying proficiency, French immersion current practices are based on the premise that children

learn to read in French and later transfer this ability to reading in English. This study suggests that there is a need to better understand what skills can be transferred from English to French, and what is the role of oral proficiency in the development of reading skills.

By teaching reading and writing in French, grade one teachers concentrate on the explicit aspect of the French language at a time when children are introduced to the language, whereas Genessee (1991) underlines the importance of implicit language: "The unique and, I would hazard to guess, the psycholinguistically most significant aspect of language development in immersion depends on the implicit language curriculum. Indeed, the rationale behind immersion is that the students will learn the language skills required to learn their academic subjects." (p. 195). Thus, there is a need to understand better the role of both implicit and explicit languages in relation to the introduction of formal literacy at the grade one level in French immersion.

The issue of students experiencing difficulties in the program reveals that the characteristics of French immersion students are changing. Major changes noticed by teachers include the increasing range in children's intellectual abilities and the decreasing parental support most children entering the program receive at home. According to teachers, these changes contribute to the fact that a growing number of children are experiencing difficulties in the program. Teachers notice that teaching practices that have been

extremely successful up to now with former students are not as effective with some students now enrolled in the program.

Teachers have indicated that when children experience difficulties at the grade one level, their problems are directly or indirectly related to learning to read. Teachers described three possible levels of intervention to help children experiencing difficulties in the program. The first level of intervention is at the teacher level. Most teachers work individually with students in order to improve the situation. The second level is at the parent level. Parents are informed and are invited to collaborate with teachers to help the child. The third level is at the school level; (not all schools had support programs to offer help at that level). When support is available, a specialist works in collaboration with the teacher and the parents to help the child. Teachers mentioned that most difficulties disappear or are under control after proper attention is given to children.

Although there is help available for students, most parents become very anxious when their child experiences difficulties in the program and seriously question the suitability of the program for him or her.

With respect to that issue, researchers report that switching out of French immersion is not necessary beneficial to students experiencing difficulties in the program. Bruck (1984), indicates that for a student experiencing difficulties transfer out of the program

does not necessarily result in academic, linguistic or affective improvement. It is important to indicate that second language education does not necessarily contribute to poor levels of academic achievement; rather, achievement is associated primarily with individual differences in psychological functioning. As well, Wiss (1987) affirms that when deficits in cognitive and academic skills are evident in English, they are also evident in French. Similarly, Genessee (1987) argues that students should not be transferred from French immersion because it deprives them of the benefits of intensive French language learning. Transferring students out of French immersion can also have immediate negative effects on the transferred students' self-perception.

More specific to the Alberta context, Keeps (1992) denounces the "easy-in, easy-out" optional mentality of French immersion programming in the following terms. At the entry level, there is no selection process in place to admit students in the program, but she claims that French immersion has a hidden selection procedure. All students have an equal chance of entering the program. However, once in the program, not all children have an equal chance of being successful. When students experience difficulties, teachers refer them to a specialist. If the specialist's interventions are successful, children likely continue in the program. If remediation is not successful, the consequence is usually a drastic removal from the program. Hence, the referral process serves as a hidden selection procedure.

Although French immersion is considered a program of choice, it is often treated as an optional program such as band or football. Keeps claims that the anomaly with this false conception is that French immersion is an entire curriculum. If failure occurs, it is not failure in one subject, but global failure in a child's total education. Current practices should be revised to ensure that full accountability is given to all children in the program. Keeps argues that to be a viable program for all students, French immersion has to be treated as a mandatory program and has to offer all the services offered in English schools.

As well, Keeps mentions that current practices regarding children experiencing difficulties in the program reflect a child-deficit model emphasizing "fixing" the child as the remedy for all problems. She advocates an ecological approach that would consider the impact of the learning environment on children experiencing difficulties and vice-versa. Such practice is more consistent with current learning theories and stops attempting to remediate within-child variables alone or eliminating children from the program.

In short, some teachers in this study have expressed concerns regarding the development of literacy in French, and related concerns with the increasing number of children experiencing difficulties with learning to read in the program. Results from this study indicate that it is timely to look at an ecological approach as suggested by Keeps, that would try to help children solve their problems not only by looking at within- child variables, but also by

looking at program delivery and pedagogical interventions that would better respond to the needs of the new French immersion clientele.

Evaluation of student learning

26. How do you evaluate your students? (How do you determine success, difficulty or failure?)

Evaluation is perceived differently by different teachers. Answers to this question reveal two major orientations. Some teachers focused their evaluation on the attainment of program objectives, and others focused on what children could do and how they were progressing.

Indicators of evaluation emphasis on program objectives were: many little mathematics tests where students had to read the questions independently and silently; dictations every day; many oral tests; reading comprehension tests; mixture of oral and written comprehension such as circling words said by the teacher. For one teacher, all program objectives were evaluated in an ongoing fashion. If the final objective was to learn 26 letters, the evaluation in September would be to know 10 letters, in March 18 letters, and 26 at the end of the year. One teacher mentioned evaluating where the child was in relation to the program objectives. An example of reporting such evaluation was judging if specific objectives were met all the time, sometimes, or were being developed. This teacher felt that this system was really good for reporting reading and writing evaluations.

For teachers emphasizing what children could do, evaluation was difficult. "Quand je donne un test, je ne veux pas laisser l'enfant qui a un problème. Pour moi un test peut être utilisé pour enseigner." Some teachers considered that each child was unique and different and mentioned not having estab ed a threshold level. One teacher mentioned: "Chaque enfan est différent et unique. Je n'ai pas de seuil que les enfants doivent atteindre. Si l'enfant est fort, je demande plus. Si l'enfant a de la difficulté, je ne m'attends pas à ce qu'il atteigne les objectifs du programme. On ne peut pas s'attendre à ce que tous les enfants atteignent les mêmes objectifs en même temps."

Another teacher mentioned not giving tests, but observing children every day and writing comments about what they were doing. She used a grid that described the physical, mental and emotional development of children. Every day work and efforts were observed and comments were written in a book. One teacher mentioned having a portfolio of children's work and using these productions for evaluating progress. Another teacher mentioned noting if the child could do the work alone or with help from the teacher. For another teacher, what was important in grade one was that the child adapted well socially and physically to the class.

For year-end evaluation, two different positions were observed. For some teachers, students' attainment of program objectives by the end of the year was not mandatory. They considered that some children needed more time and would continue

their progress in grade two. For other teachers, children had to be able to complete some required tasks. It was important that children knew their subjects before moving on to grade two. For one teacher, a child who could not read simple syllables and short sentences at the end of the year would fail grade one. "L'échec est normal en immersion parce qu'on accepte tous les enfants."

All teachers mentioned that ultimately parents decided if a child needed to be retained in grade one. But when a child had problems with more than one academic subject and also had difficulty in adapting socially, some teachers felt that the French immersion program was too stressful, and strongly advised parents to withdraw the child from the program.

27. When you evaluate science, for example, do you evaluate concepts separately from what students can say about the concept in French?

28. If a child is weak in French, how do you evaluate his academic achievement in other subjects?

Answers to these questions demonstrate that teachers were all in agreement with the developmental process involved in learning a second language. However, some disagreement was voiced regarding the importance of being able to verbally express understanding of academic concepts in French.

One teacher described the process involved in evaluating Science concepts as follows:

> "J'observe ce que l'enfant fait. Nous commençons avec une question, une hypothèse. Stage un - l'enfant peut participer. Stage deux - l'enfant peut exprimer ses idées en anglais. Stage trois - l'enfant peut exprimer ses idées en utilisant un mélange d'anglais et de français. Stage quatre - l'enfant peut exprimer ses idées, en français, avec de l'aide. Stage cinq - l'enfant peut exprimer ses idées, en français, sans aide. Je suis ces phases et je rapporte ce que je vois et ce que j'entends. Je décris toujours ce que l'enfant peut faire."

One teacher explained her practice as follows:

> "Premièrement, je vérifie la compréhension d'un concept en demandant aux enfants de démontrer ce qu'ils comprennent, par exemple, en encerclant une réponse. Si l'enfant comprend un concept mais ne peut pas l'expliquer en français, c'est un "C". Sur le bulletin, je dirais que l'enfant comprend mais ne peut pas exprimer le concept en français. Si un enfant comprend une partie des concepts et peut les expliquer en partie en français, c'est un "B". Si un enfant comprend et peut expliquer les concepts en français, c'est un "A".

One teacher mentioned that when evaluating Science concepts she accepted English but if a child needed to use English, she would mention difficulty in expressing ideas in French. Another teacher mentioned that if children answered in English, and could not express concepts in French, it was probably due to the fact that these concepts were not clear for them.

For some teachers, evaluation consisted of asking students to show what they understood by doing an experiment. These teachers accepted the fact that students gave half-English, half-French answers. One teacher mentioned: "Je sépare le concept de la langue. Si un enfant peut expliquer un concept en anglais, j'accepte sa réponse. Je lui donne le vocabulaire en français et je l'aide à exprimer une réponse en français." Another teacher mentioned that she accepted drawings as a way of showing understanding.

One teacher accepted children's use of English in the evaluation of academic concepts because she felt they did not have all the necessary vocabulary to answer in French. Another teacher added "Quand j'évalue un concept, je n'évalue pas la langue. Les enfants peuvent utiliser l'anglais pour démontrer ce qu'ils comprennent et je répète leur réponse en français." Another teacher's reaction was: "Quand j'évalue les sciences, je n'évalue pas le français. Nous devons faire attention à ne pas évaluer le français quand nous évaluons un concept. Si nous évaluons la langue quand nous évaluons un concept, ce n'est pas juste pour l'enfant."

29. How do you evaluate students' French language proficiency?

Most teachers agreed that evaluating students' French language proficiency was a difficult task. One teacher mentioned, "Je n'ai pas vu d'instruments qui pourraient m'aider." Another said, "Je me pose cette question chaque année. Cela dépend des enfants et de la classe. Le programme d'études me donne quoi enseigner. Je trouve que le plus que je donne, le plus que les enfants peuvent faire." One teacher said, "Les objectifs sont trop compliqués à évaluer. Dans ma classe, il y a autant de niveaux que d'enfants." Another teacher mentioned using the program's objectives to evaluate children's development.

Indicators of language proficiency development were given by teachers in these terms:

Attitude:

The child:

- tries to use French;
- tries to use what is learned in class;
- is willing to use French independently and spontaneously;
- feels comfortable using French.

Performance:

At the grade one level, a child should be able to:

- repeat what is learned;
- use learned French words;
- ask what s/he wants;
- communicate a message;
- express ideas in French;
- discuss with teacher and other children;
- read;
- write.

Language accuracy:

For most teachers, grammar was not important at that level, but all of them expected students to use complete and well organized sentences.

The ways teachers evaluate students' French proficiency were varied and depended on what they understood by proficiency. Some teachers evaluated children's French proficiency by observing and describing what children could do with the language; others evaluated how children achieved the French language arts program's objectives, and for one teacher much value was given to children's dictations.

30. According to you, what is the easiest subject for students to learn?

More than half of the teachers believed that Mathematics was the easiest subject to learn for the same reasons Mathematics was the easiest subject to teach. Mathematics was easy mainly because numbers are visually the same in English and in French. One teacher felt that children were more exposed to mathematical concepts than they were to formal reading and writing language concepts at home. Other reasons for Mathematics being easy to learn were that children could learn Mathematics by manipulating objects and that the language aspect in Mathematics was minimal at the beginning. This easiness disappeared when children had to solve problems which require reading.

Two teachers mentioned French. One teacher felt that there was always at least one theme that children preferred which motivated them to talk. Another teacher mentioned that French was easy to learn because children were exposed to it all day. According to this teacher, learning French could be improved if children in the French immersion program had the opportunity to interact (talk - play) with Francophone children.

One teacher mentioned Science because it could be learned experientially using many hands-on activities. One teacher mentioned Social Studies because students talked about themselves, and there was no wrong answer.

Finally, one teacher said that it was different for every child.

31. According to you, what is the most difficult subject for students to learn?

All teachers but one mentioned reading or writing in French as being the most difficult skills to learn in French immersion. Teachers explained that introducing reading and writing in French was difficult mainly due to the fact that children had a very limited experience with the French language when they were introduced to reading and writing. At the beginning of the year, children were struggling with oral comprehension, and it was at that time that they had to learn to read in French.

Teachers mentioned that all children learned to read but they learned at different times. Some children learned quickly, while others were slow and experienced many difficulties learning to read. Some teachers mentioned that when children knew how to read in English before they were introduced to reading in French, they progressed remarkably quickly, not only in reading in French, but also in all other subjects.

Some teachers mentioned writing as being difficult to learn for children. One teacher mentioned that most children could copy, but questioned if all children could understand and read what they had

copied. Some teachers mentioned that starting independent writers was difficult. They felt that children needed more time to talk and read before they could express themselves in writing.

One teacher mentioned that Social Studies was difficult for children because of the vocabulary needed to express ideas and feelings. According to her, abstract ideas presented could not be learned through illustrations, and abstract concepts were hard for students to understand in their limited second language.

One teacher mentioned that the degree of difficulty with learning academic concepts depended on children's life experiences. For some, Science was difficult because they never had the experience of observing and questioning. For others, it could have been any other subject.

32. What are the problems associated with evaluating students in immersion?

For most teachers, the difficulty with evaluating in immersion resides in the predicament of evaluating children's understanding of concepts when children had a limited proficiency in French. Some teachers believed in verifying the understanding of concepts independently from the language students could use to express their understanding of those concepts, while others felt that language was a crucial part of the evaluation.

The other main challenge was to report progress to parents so that it could be meaningful to them. Teachers noticed that many parents compared the French immersion program with the English program and became anxious when they saw that their child could not do, in French immersion, what children did in the English program. Teachers mentioned having to reassure parents, especially when they worried about their child not being able to read at the same time children did in the English program. Teachers also found that they had to clarify for parents what could be expected from their child in the program.

Teachers felt the need for more efficient ways to report children's progress in French immersion. One teacher mentioned that the Department's objectives were not developmental enough to be used to show children's progress during the year. Some teachers mentioned a need to describe to parents what children were doing. One teacher used videos so that parents could see for themselves how their child was interacting in class.

Finally, one teacher mentioned that, after all, the challenge of evaluating in French immersion was the same as evaluating in English. Did the student progress? Was the progress sufficient?

33. Are you free to evaluate your students as you want or do you follow specific criteria established by the school?

All teachers reported that they could evaluate children's progress according to their own criteria. Current practices were varied and showed a state of transition. Some teachers' comments reflected the current situation. "Notre bulletin est mieux cette année qu'il était auparavant". "Cette année, nous avons un nouveau bulletin basé sur des commentaires." "Les bulletins vont changer l'année prochaine."

The Department mandates the French immersion program's objectives, and teachers report students' learning using their preferred methods. Teachers mentioned different ways of reporting achievement: percentages; A, B, C; 1, 2, 3; frequency indicators such as sometimes, often, always; descriptive comments with respect to effort and academic achievement; pre-determined descriptors such as: M = mastered, N = not mastered, NC = not covered. One teacher noticed that N created much anxiety for parents.

Discussion of Results

Although all teachers' practices demonstrated that evaluation of children's progress was tied to the learning process in relation to specific objectives -- program objectives or teacher's objectives, the results of this study reveal that teachers in French immersion share

different views and practices regarding evaluation and account differently for the contribution of students' second language proficiency into the learning progress.

In a French immersion program, second language proficiency permeates all aspects of communication and learning. As a result, teachers have to account for that phenomenon in their evaluation of students' progress. This study shows significant differences in their current practices. Globally, the study illustrates that teachers do not explicitly differentiate between the development of basic interpersonal communication skills, and the development of cognitive and academic language proficiency in French as a second language. There is no distinction between personal, social and content specific language. Secondly, it shows that there is dissension with regard to taking into account French second language proficiency in evaluating academic concept mastery.

With respect to evaluating students' French language proficiency, teachers in this study deplore the fact that the French Language Arts program of studies is not designed in terms of sequence of growth reflecting children's second language development on a continuum basis. "Dans la classe, il y a autant de niveaux qu'il y a d'enfants." "Pour certains enfants, les objectifs du programme de français sont trop difficiles et pour d'autres, ils sont trop faciles." "Pas tous les enfants apprennent les mêmes choses en même temps." They also deplored the lack of appropriate instruments to help them evaluate children's second language

proficiency. "Je n'ai pas vu de test qui pourrait m'aider." "Je me pose cette question (comment évaluer la compétence langagière) chaque année."

Consequently, teachers are the sole judge of "what" is second language proficiency, of "what level" children should attain, of "how" to evaluate it, and of "when" to evaluate it during the year. Indicators of language proficiency vary from teacher to teacher. Some examples of "what" children's second language proficiency mean to them is described in these terms: able to read simple syllables and short sentences at the end of the year; few or no mistakes on dictations; it depends on the children and on the class.

Although teachers seem to have developed a common sense of appropriateness - complete and well-structured sentences, - the lack of a clear language proficiency definition can result in unfair consequences for children. For example, some teachers insist on the attainment of French Language Arts program objectives by the end of the year, while others do not. Moreover, some insist on the attainment of objectives that are not in the program of studies, i.e. phonics. The "what level" is very unclear. "Le plus que je donne, le plus que les enfants sont capables de faire." "Je m'attends plus des enfants maintenant que lorsque j'ai commencé à enseigner." "Je n'ai pas de seuil de compétence pour les enfants." For some teachers, French Language Arts objectives are divided over the year and children have to know specific objectives by a certain time " The "how" varies depending on what proficiency means to teachers.

Dictations, oral and written comprehension tests, no tests, portfolio, and observations are all different examples of how teachers evaluate proficiency. The "when" varies depending on what teachers call evaluation. This study shows as well, that there is no clear distinction between the two educational functions of evaluation: formative and summative. According to Lussier (1991), formative evaluation is geared to help students in their learning progress. Summative evaluation is geared to assess the quality of learning and to determine the students' mastery level of program objectives.

As pointed out earlier by Weber and Tardif (1991), "the problems of understanding and assessing young children's progress as successful learners of a second language are complex and various" (p. 916). Nevertheless, they indicate a need for teachers and researchers to define "the kind of language competency that can realistically be fostered and measured in a given classroom context." (ibid.). Once these expectations are defined, appropriate ways of assessing student progress need to be devised. This researcher would add that such expectations and assessment tools need to be clarified at the provincial program level to allow for more coherence and consistency at the teaching practices level, resulting in more consistent evaluation practices for all students in the program.

Teachers' comments show that reporting of evaluation is in a state of transition. "Les bulletins vont changer l'année prochaine." Teachers are looking for better ways to meaningfully report children's progress to parents. Current practices are: percentages; A,

B, C; 1, 2, 3; frequency indicators, descriptive comments. Teachers are not satisfied with some of these practices mainly because they feel that they do not help parents understand how their child is progressing in the program, and because some indicators create unnecessary anxiety.

With respect to the role of French proficiency in the evaluation of academic concept mastery, some teachers strongly feel that academic concept mastery should be evaluated separately from second language proficiency, while others feel as strongly that in a French immersion program, French language proficiency has to be an integral part of academic concept mastery evaluation.

An answer to this dilemma can be offered in the results of a study conducted by Alberta Education in the early 1990s to find out if language of testing was a variable that affected French immersion students' performance on test. The study was designed to examine how grade three, six and nine French immersion students responded to Science, Mathematics and Social Studies test questions presented in French and in English. The French immersion student population was randomly divided so that fifty percent of the population wrote an English version of the test while the other fifty percent wrote its translated French version. Results from the Alberta Education study show that "performances by students who wrote the English form of the tests were consistently and significantly higher than were the performances achieved by students who wrote the tests in French" (p. 18). The results also show "that while French immersion students

as a whole have a good command of subject matter, they are not as able to demonstrate their knowledge and skills when they are tested in French as when they are tested in English" (p. 18).

These results should be of interest to teachers when establishing their own standards and norms against which to compare and report student achievement in different subjects. Moreover, these results are important to consider, especially when it is known that parents compare their child's progress to children's progress in the English program and are anxious about the success of their child in the program.

Communication with Students

34. Do you speak only in French with your students?

Teachers affirmed that in principle, French was the only language of communication and instruction in a French immersion classroom. With the exception of teachers who taught religion in English, a school district requirement, the occasions and the reasons for which teachers would consider using English were varied. One teacher mentioned using French 100% of the time in class except for emergencies and safety reasons. For her, discipline cases that had to be dealt with in English were dealt with on an individual basis in the hallway. Other teachers were more tolerant and mentioned some of the following additional reasons: for something important like announcements; for discipline reasons with a child or with the class; when children were going through some difficult times such as divorce or death; when a child was hurt or troubled; as a treat when children had been good all day, "quand les enfants apportent un livre en anglais de la maison, je le lis parfois à la fin de la journée comme récompense.". One teacher said: "Quand on parle d'émotions, c'est plus important de se faire comprendre que de parler français."

Some teachers mentioned progression during the year and during the learning process. They felt that it was important to start the year in French. One teacher indicated that she spoke more French in June than she did in September One teacher indicated

that she used English once, then used French thereafter for establishing routines at the beginning of the year. Although most teachers mentioned the importance of speaking French when they taught their subjects, some teachers mentioned the importance of using English when they saw that after many different explanations, children still did not understand a concept and were at a point of frustration. In such situations, some teachers mentioned using some English words, translating them into French, and continuing to use French thereafter.

35. Speaking only in French, how do you establish a warm atmosphere with your students?

All teachers mentioned that warmth was not only in the language but in the attitude and in the contact with children. One teacher mentioned that only a small percentage of the information in communication was given by words. Most of the information was given by non-verbal clues such as gestures, eye expression, and verbal clues like tonality and rhythm of the voice. She argued that it was not always necessary to understand the words to understand a message.

Most teachers mentioned that communication was more important than French. They believed that if communication was good between teacher and children, French would come. For all teachers, it was important that students felt secure in September.

They used many strategies to create and maintain a warm atmosphere: smiles, hugs, holding hands, lots of actions, demonstrations to show what is meant and wanted, playing with children, a good sense of humour with funny gestures. One teacher felt the importance of giving children the message that she understood it was difficult for them to learn in a second language. They had to feel that the teacher was there to help them, and together they could succeed. A key element mentioned by teachers was to gently encourage children to use French, not to force them.

A warm atmosphere was also created by children's attitude. They wanted to please and learn, so they willingly cooperated, and naturally helped each other.

Two teachers mentioned the importance of children's first language in their relationship with their students. Some teachers felt it was difficult to do everything in French all the time and advocated a selective use of English in the French immersion program. One teacher mentioned having "un moment spécial, en anglais, avec chaque enfant. Je sais qu'il y a des fois où ils veulent tellement me dire quelque chose et ils n'y arrivent pas en français. Il y a des moments où je réalise que je ne connais pas bien mes enfants à cause de la langue. Ils veulent me faire plaisir donc ils parlent seulement en français. Je sais que des fois ils ne vont pas me dire quelque chose parce qu'ils ne sont pas capables de l'exprimer en français. Je trouve que c'est dommage parce que je ne sais pas toujours quand il y a des problèmes à la maison, ou je ne sais pas tout ce qu'ils aiment.

Donc, j'ai un moment spécial avec chaque enfant en anglais parce que je peux mieux rejoindre mes étudiants et ils peuvent mieux me rejoindre."

36. Speaking French, how do you use students' known experiences in English to bring them to learn the unknown in French?

Teachers realized that children needed to make a smooth transition from English to French, and this transition took time. The following five major strategies were mentioned as effective in connecting the known in English to the unknown in French: capitalizing on the non-verbal contribution to meaning in a communication; changing students' English output into French input; building from the known French words to the unknown in French language; working from concrete to abstract topics; and starting with children's familiar life experiences to discover the unfamiliar.

Teachers capitalized on the non-verbal aspect of language by accompanying their verbal language with many non-verbal clues such as visuals, illustrations and actions. In most cases, this non-verbal aspect of teacher's French communication was similar in the children's first language and served as a bridge for understanding the new second language. Non-verbal support gradually diminished and eventually disappeared when children could understand the verbal aspect of the new second language.

Teachers transformed student's English output into French input: first, at the comprehension level, by translating what students said in English into French, and then, at the production level, by asking them to repeat this new way of expressing the same idea. When children said something in English, teachers answered in French or translated children's interventions into French. That way children could learn the vocabulary they needed and at the same time learned how to use it. Other strategies used by teachers were: starting a word and letting students finish it, and extending children's answers by adding information to their interventions.

To build from the known French words to the unknown French language, teachers recognized what students already knew. When teachers used a new text for example, they asked students to say the words they knew and asked them to identify the words they did not know. One teacher explained how she built oral understanding on words that children knew to introduce new words and structures.

> "Par exemple, s'ils connaissent le mot "crayon". Je demande "Combien de crayons?" Je vais répondre: "Il y a deux crayons." Ils vont répéter: "Il y a deux crayons." Ils apprennent le mot "deux", et je continue: "Combien de règles?" De "crayons", à "deux", à "règles", et le reste. J'écris les nouveaux mots et je les dis en français."

All teachers mentioned the importance of building from the concrete to the abstract. Teachers reported that experiential

activities allowed children to connect their concrete learning reality to abstract French words and structures. These words and structures were then used to express abstract ideas and concepts.

Teachers mentioned the importance of using children's life experience in their learning process. However, because available resources did not always reflect children's reality - for example, special holidays familiar to children in Alberta were not always present in commercially produced textbooks - teachers often had to create their own resources.

One teacher explained that at the conceptual level, learning in French or learning in English was the same. When something was unknown to children, French immersion teachers had to use the same strategies English first language teachers would use. They first asked questions to verify the level of understanding and then they introduced concepts in a logical order for children, respecting their learning styles. In French immersion, however, there is an added dimension -- the second language dimension. Teachers cannot assume that children have the linguistic background to deal with the concepts being presented. They have to plan for students' development of such linguistic competence in concert with students' concept development.

37. Do you expect children to always speak in French?

Teachers mentioned that it would be nice, but not realistic, to expect all students to use French all the time in grade one. There was the expectation that French was the medium for learning, and that children would function in French, but this expectation was met gradually. French was not imposed at the beginning of the year, but students were strongly encouraged to use it according to their own rhythm and abilities. This expectation was always present except when dealing with emergency situations.

Teachers explained that they had an explicit or implicit rule that French should be spoken by all students in the classroom, Accepting that students would speak mostly English at the beginning of the year, the transition from English to French was gradually achieved through more or less structured learning and social activities, and positive reinforcement to encourage children to use French. Teachers reported that by the end of the year, most students could use French for all learning and social functions in the classroom.

38. What techniques do you employ to help students use French?

Teachers explained that they could teach French and expose students to French, but using French had to come from the students. Consequently, teaching strategies were important, but students' learning strategies were equally important.

Some teaching strategies described by teachers:

Modeling and explaining differently many times;
Using other children as models;
Using older students to work with grade one children;
Working on a one on one basis with shy children;
Translating;
Asking children to say in French what they just said in English;
Saying something in French and asking children to repeat;
Answering children's questions in French when they ask them in English;
Elaborating on students' French answers;
Helping the child express his/her ideas;
Using themes that children like;
Creating many opportunities for children to talk.

Some basic student learning strategies:

Observing;
Memorizing basic sentences at the beginning of the year;
Asking in French how to say something in French: (Comment dit-on... en français?);
Thinking before trying to express ideas in French;
Repeating after the teacher;
Using some English words when the French words are unknown;
Asking for help;
Using non-verbal language (mime, drawings, actions, etc.) to understand or express ideas;

Talking a lot;
Watching for other people's reactions.

Finally, all teachers noticed that children were eager to please and were proud to be able to use French. All they needed was the right environment, encouragement, and positive reinforcement.

39. What do you do when children use English?

Teachers explained that at the beginning of the year, it was normal for children to use English because their knowledge of French was very limited. At the grade one level, the teacher was practically the only source of French input for children, so transition from English to French had to be carefully planned.

During the learning process, many strategies were employed to encourage students to use French. The first strategy when children did not know how to express their ideas in French was to answer back in French when they use English. By doing so, children were exposed to the language they needed to express their ideas in the future. A second step, when judged appropriate, was to ask students to repeat after the teacher.

When children partially knew what they wanted to express, they could express their ideas using some English and some French.

The teacher helped them transform their complete production into French.

When they knew how to express an idea in French and still used English, teachers used some of the following strategies: they pretended not to understand; they asked the child to say it in French; they answered in French; they put on a little pressure, as one teacher mentioned "Je pleure et ils commencent à utiliser le français tout de suite, ou je leur dis que je suis sourde." "Quelquefois c'est une question de confiance. Les enfants ont besoin d'être encouragés: plus ils essaient, plus ils deviennent confiants" Because teachers considered it important that children use French, most of them insisted on students using French when they felt that children were capable.

In addition, some teachers mentioned the importance of classroom environment and felt that a good learning atmosphere was essential for all children to progress. Teachers felt that the classroom atmosphere could not be destroyed by discipline problems caused by a child not wanting to be in the program. When a child did not behave appropriately or refused to speak French, teachers invited parents to discuss the problem. When the situation was considered serious, the question of French immersion being the best education program for the child was addressed. In most cases, the situation improved after proper interventions. However, in some isolated cases, children were removed from the program.

40. Do you think that all children can succeed in French immersion?

Teachers mentioned three important conditions for all children to be successful in French immersion. The first condition was children's motivation. Children had to want to be in the program and had to have the desire to learn French. The second condition was parental support - support for the program and support for their child. The third condition was school support - support for the program and accountability to all students, specially those experiencing difficulties.

When these three conditions were respected, teachers saw few other reasons interfering with success in French immersion. Some teachers, however, mentioned that French immersion was very demanding, and for that reason may not be the best program for children who have difficulties with their first language, or for the ones who have serious learning difficulties. In such situations, some teachers felt that the added component of second language learning to basic education was too demanding. They felt that for the children's own self-esteem and confidence, children needed to feel successful. They also felt that for children experiencing serious difficulties, chances of being successful were better for them in an English program. Teachers were also concerned if children became frustrated, emotionally disturbed, and started having physical or emotional problems due to anxiety caused or increased by the French

immersion program, teachers felt that it was asking too much. One teacher mentioned that there were other ways and opportunities for those children to learn French in life.

For similar reasons, some teachers mentioned that French immersion was not the best program for mentally handicapped children. According to them, these students would have the same learning difficulties in French or in English, but the major difference was that in the English program, Anglophone parents would be in a better position to help their child.

One teacher stated that success for all children would be possible only if the children's first language was recognized as an integral part of the French immersion program giving students opportunities to use English during the day. Without that condition, she felt that French immersion could be difficult for some students.

Discussion of Results

Communication with children is of great importance in all learning situations. In this regard, what is particular to French immersion is its indispensable and fundamental basis that communication has to occur in French, a language children do not know when they enter the program. In this study, teachers described how grade one immersion teachers communicate with

children, and how children learn to communicate in a language they barely know at the beginning of the year.

Results show that all French immersion teachers agree at the theoretical level with the basic principle that French is the only language of instruction and communication with students, but at the practical level their actual practices vary. While some teachers advocate the use of 100% French for all purposes (except for safety reasons), other teachers justify three other reasons for their use of English. Some teachers described a progression in their use of French for establishing routines in the classroom. This progression show a transition from English immediately translated into French, to French only. Some teachers also mentioned a progression in their use of French from September to June when dealing with discipline problems. For some teachers, discipline situations are dealt with in English at the beginning of the year, and gradually dealt with in French during the year. Finally some teachers use English when children do not understand a concept after various explanations and when they are at the verge of frustration.

Most teachers are reluctant to use English, feeling a sense of violating the "immersion" golden rule. Philosophically, teachers feel bound to this golden rule, but their daily practices reflect a need to have recourse to children's first language. As Genessee (1991) points out, there is a need to better understand teachers' use of the French language with students. "At present, we know surprisingly little

about what immersion teachers do and do not do with language." (p. 197).

In this study teachers unanimously affirmed that communicating with children in French does not interfere with the creation of a warm atmosphere in the classroom. According to them, emphasizing the non-verbal component of communication in social, teaching and learning situations helps children compensate for their lack of verbal language. At the personal level, however, a few teachers deplored the limitations imposed by communicating only in French with their students.

In French immersion, language learning is embedded in a rich meaningful context. Learning academic subjects through the medium of French provides ample opportunities for children explicitly to learn concepts while implicitly learning the language. Teachers mentioned using a variety of teaching strategies to help children develop their receptive French language proficiency before expecting them to use their productive skills. Teachers underline the importance of strongly encouraging students to speak French by providing them with the necessary opportunities to do so, but do not expect them to use French until they were ready.

Krashen (1984) explains why French immersion works in the following terms. "According to current theory, we acquire language in only one way: when we understand messages in that language, when we receive comprehensible input." (61). This is precisely the

hallmark of French immersion. In a French immersion program, teachers provide an environment rich in comprehensible input for children.

In addition to a carefully planned and structured learning environment, teachers pointed out the need for students to be responsible for their learning. Because students are not only expected to learn French, but are also expected to learn their academic subjects through the medium of French, teachers have to foster the development of students' second language learning strategies. They feel that these strategies are crucial to French immersion students, because ultimately, total academic failure can result if they are not successful second language learners.

According to teachers, all children can succeed in French immersion when the following three important conditions are met: the child is motivated to learn French; parents support the child and the program; the school supports the program, and is accountable to all children - strong and weak.

Communication with colleagues and school administrators

41. What aspects of French immersion do you discuss with your colleagues?

Teachers mentioned discussing many aspects of their program with their colleagues during the year: themes, teaching strategies, teaching and learning activities, resources, evaluation, and objectives. They also talked about things they can do together for children, and share good ideas. As well, they talked about children - what and how they learn, their successes and their difficulties.

One teacher mentioned meeting with kindergarten teachers at the end of the school-year to know more about students coming to grade one the following year and to make arrangements to meet those students. At that time, she also meets with the grade two teacher who will receive her grade one students the following year to discuss her grade one children's aptitudes and personalities. She also discusses program continuity with the grade three teacher.

42. What aspects of French immersion do you discuss with your administrators?

Teachers reported discussing many aspects of the French immersion program with their administrators. They discussed children's successes and difficulties, student evaluation, parental concerns, program objectives and resources, teachers' needs, concerns, and frustrations. In addition to these topics, individual teachers mentioned discussing philosophy regarding second language learning and children development, how to improve and promote the program, and the school atmosphere.

One teacher from a multi-track school mentioned not discussing anything with the school administrators who, according to her, did not show any interest in the program.

#43. Do your administrators speak French?

In six out of eight schools participating in this study, there was a minimum of one school administrator who could speak French in each school. In the single-track schools, both the principal and the vice-principal spoke French in two schools, and the vice-principal spoke French in the third school. In the two dual-track schools, the administrators could not speak French. However, in one school, the teacher mentioned that they were learning French and were making an effort to use it for the morning announcements and at special

school functions that involved children from the French immersion program. This was seen as giving support to the program and very much appreciated by the teacher. In the three multi-track schools, one principal could speak French.

44. Are you satisfied with the frequency and the quality of communication between you and your colleagues and your administrators?

This study showed that school context had a major impact on the degree of satisfaction with communication between colleagues and administrators. There was a clear distinction between the situation in single and dual-track schools compared to the situation in multi-track schools.

In single-track schools teachers commented on the openness between them and the administrators and were very satisfied with their communication with their colleagues. In dual-track schools, teachers said they were satisfied. They did not see any problem, and described their communication with their administrators as open and frequent, but deplored being the only grade one French immersion in the school. In multi-track schools, there was clear dissatisfaction with some aspects of communication in the school. In one instance, a teacher said that her administrators did not understand French immersion. She was afraid to say what she thought and could not share ideas with them. In another instance, a teacher said that communication with colleagues was satisfactory but felt that her

administrators were always caught between programs. This resulted in major problems at the school level during the year. She mentioned being able to speak French in her classroom but felt the pressure of speaking English as soon as she left her classroom. In the third multi-track school, the teacher said that communication with administrators and colleagues was not satisfactory but felt that she had enough experience not to let this issue interfere with her work. She mentioned however that this situation was creating problems for her French immersion colleagues who did not have her experience.

Discussion of Results

Results from this study demonstrate a direct relationship between school context and teachers' satisfaction regarding professional communication with their colleagues and administrators.

This study reveals that teachers in French immersion do not have any formal communication network. Communication between teachers happens not because their assignment requires such involvement, but mainly because of their personal need or desire. Once hired, most teachers are left on their own. In this study, teachers in single-track schools mentioned having many opportunities to share with other grade one teachers in the school. On the other hand, teachers in dual-track or multi-track schools, being the only grade one French immersion teacher in the school,

deplore not being able to benefit easily from other grade one French immersion colleagues' contributions.

Results show that teachers' satisfaction with regard to communication with their school administrators is also largely dependent upon the school context. In single-track schools, teachers express great satisfaction regarding their communication with their school administrators. Teachers in dual-track schools are also satisfied with their communication with school administrators, but some feel that administrators are divided between programs and consequently cannot not give their full support to the immersion program. Teachers in multi-track schools are clearly dissatisfied with many aspects of their communication with their school administrators. In such contexts, teachers feel that communication with administrators is meaningless, because they feel they do not understand the program and are more concerned about the other programs than the French immersion program. In one school, the teacher mentioned not having any communication with her administrators and indicated that they did not show any interest in the program.

These results reaffirm Tétrault's (1984) findings that commitment to French immersion and knowledge about the program are not mandatory requirements for a principalship in a French immersion school. As Tétrault explains: "... principals are placed in charge of an immersion program without having had an opportunity

to become knowledgeable about or committed to the immersion program" (p. 49).

As administrators' commitment is an important known variable in program success, one could question why such conditions are tolerated by district administrators. One could also wonder if program success is not jeopardized under such circumstances. Study results show a need for jurisdictions to have explicit beliefs and values regarding bilingual education before implementing a French immersion program. Explicit beliefs and values are needed to develop coherent policies regarding the program. Such policies are necessary to give clear directions to administrators and teachers in the program.

The issue of language of communication was raised in dual and multi-track schools where the language of communication is clearly English. One teacher deplored the fact that she could use French only in her classroom. In her school, English is the only official language and, as such, had to be used by all in all school communications. Gagné (1991), presents the following ethnographic and sociologist reflection on this issue.

> "... il s'agit pour les francophones de se mouler aux exigences linguistiques anglophones pour ainsi atténuer les tensions qui pourraient surgir entre les deux groupes. En d'autres mots, il existe dans les écoles à double voie une division linguistique qui se manifeste concrètement

> dans des espaces donnés: dans la salle de classe, les francophones enseignent le français comme langue seconde aux jeunes anglophones; dans les salons des professeurs, elles doivent parler l'anglais avec les anglophones unilingues. Les femmes francophones - professeures d'immersion - se promènent subtilement d'un milieu à l'autre en utilisant la langue qui est exigée par la classe dominante de l'école où elles travaillent. Cette perméabilité linguistique permet de soulever la question de la viabilité du bilinguisme dans un contexte où les deux groupes linguistiques se rencontrent dans des rapports d'inégalité." (p. 68).

Jones (1984) points out that some parents prefer dual or multi-track schools because of the contact of French immersion with all-English program students and staff. He also indicates that some school jurisdictions have a policy which requires that French immersion be located in schools where there is an all-English program. In most cases, implementation of such policy results in making English the only school's official language because of the presence of monolingual English speaking students, teachers and administrators in the school. Lack of awareness that this is taking place is undermining the desired goals of bilingual education. Referring to Gagné's comments, this situation, in actual practice, is making English the only official language of the school and gives French a minority language status. This practice perpetuates

society's monolingual English political dominance, instead of modelling official bilingualism in the school context.

One teacher described how her English administrators were dealing positively with this issue. They were learning French and making an effort to use it in their regular communication with French immersion students during school morning announcements and at school functions involving French immersion students. This action was seen as very supportive of the program, and was very much appreciated by the teacher.

As previously found by Lamarre (1989), this study reaffirms that commitment, understanding of the context of French immersion, and communication are essential conditions for effective administration of a French immersion program.

Communication with Parents

45. What communication do you initiate with parents?

Teachers mentioned initiating communication with parents for different reasons. The main reason was to discuss children's progress - successes or difficulties. When children experienced difficulties, teachers discussed the situation with parents and solicited their collaboration. There were also times when teachers discussed discipline matters with parents to receive their support in changing children's inappropriate behaviors.

Other reasons to communicate with parents were: to inquire about a child's illness, to inform them of students' activities, to invite them to come to school, or to solicit their participation in extra-curricular activities.

Teachers described using a variety of communication means: information sessions, telephone calls, letters, writing notes in children's workbook or in a special notebook, and more officially, the report card.

For some teachers, communication with parents was done on a regular basis such as once a month. For other teachers, communication was more driven by situational needs.

46. What communication do parents initiate with you?

Teachers mentioned that parents initiated communication with them mostly to be reassured about the progress of their child in the program. Most teachers felt that French immersion parents were more anxious than parents of children in English programs because most of them did not speak French. According to teachers, parents felt they could not judge for themselves if their child was successful or experiencing difficulties in the program. They needed the teacher's opinion and relied on her judgment.

Teachers said that most parents compared their child's progress with the progress of children in the English program and many had concerns about reading. They all wanted to know if their child could read. Some were anxious because it took longer for their child to read than children in an English program. They did not fully understand how progress was achieved in French immersion and needed teacher's reassurance.

Another reason for parents to communicate with the teacher was to seek advice when their child was experiencing difficulties. Because parents could not speak French, they felt helpless and needed teacher's advice on how they could help their child.

Occasionally, parents phoned when their child was sick or absent or to discuss problems about bussing, playground, or money.

47. Do you think that parents are anxious about the success of their child in French immersion?

Teachers felt that most grade one parents wondered if they had made the right decision in enrolling their child in French immersion. They also felt that parents were very anxious about the success of their child in the program. The main reason for their anxiety was the fact that they could not evaluate their child's progress for themselves, in the program because they did not speak French. Relying completely on the teacher for reassurance gave them a sense of insecurity.

Parental concerns were also based on their feeling of inadequacy regarding their involvement in their child's learning. Parents felt that they could not help their child with homework as they would in an English program. When comparing their child with children in the English program, some parents were anxious because their child could not read and write like children in the English program, and some were concerned about the impact of this situation on their children's self-esteem and confidence. They were afraid that French could diminish their child's English language, and worried about French being detrimental to their child's future learning and living in an English society. Finally, some felt left out of their child's learning experiences and wanted to get involved. They wanted to know if the program was too hard for their child. They

needed to be able to detect if their child was experiencing difficulties and wanted to know how they would be able to help their child as s/he moved on to higher grades.

One teacher explained that when parents worried, they sometimes looked for excuses to withdraw their child from the program. Under stress, their first reaction was trying to find something wrong with the program, instead of looking at helping their child with his/her difficulties.

48. What do you do with parents who worry about the success of their children in French immersion?

Teachers mentioned trying to diminish parents' anxiety by encouraging them to get involved in their child's learning and by giving them pertinent information about the program.

Some teachers' initiatives were: inviting parents to school during school hours; showing and explaining children's work to parents; showing them what the child could do; showing them their child's progress; sending them articles about learning in a second language context; inviting grade one parents to talk with grade two parents; telling parents that reading to their child in English would help with learning to read in French.

Teachers mentioned that, to a certain degree, all parents worried about the success of their child in French immersion. To reduce their anxiety, all parents needed to understand the program better and to understand what was expected of children in it. Teachers found out that they had to discuss regularly the child's progress with parents and had to be honest with them. If their child had no problem they had to know it. If there was a problem they had to be informed and involved in finding solutions. They had to understand what services were available, and what could be done to support their child. When a child was experiencing difficulties, teachers had to communicate more often with parents. Some teachers invited parents to discuss the situation with school administrators and other experts.

Teachers explained that the bottom line in French immersion was that parents relied most entirely on the teacher's judgment. This was overwhelming for some teachers, who felt that the quantity and quality of help available for students experiencing difficulties was inadequate and in some cases, non existent.

Discussion of Results

These results demonstrate that most grade one French immersion parents are very concerned with their child's overall education. Their two main concerns are: how well their child is

progressing in the program, and how they can help their child with school related work when they do not speak French.

Teachers realize that because most English parents do not understand French, they have to rely especially on the grade one teacher for advice and reassurance regarding their child's progress. Teachers believe that this feeling of dependance creates much anxiety for parents. Another source of anxiety takes place when parents compare their child to children in English programs. They observe major differences regarding the development of reading skills of children in both programs and question the impact of French immersion on their child's first language and academic future.

French immersion teachers know that parents are apprehensive but not all teachers know how to handle the situation. This study shows that some teachers do not have the support from their administrators or other experts to communicate effectively with parents.

Some schools are proactive in organizing information sessions for parents where educators explain the program, show resources, give information regarding the development of children in a bilingual context, and answer parents questions. Teachers in these schools affirm that such measures have a positive impact on parents' attitude regarding the program. However, some schools do not have any systematic communication procedure, and delegate this responsibility entirely to teachers. While most experienced teachers

have learned to understand parents' concerns and have developed their own communication system, most beginning teachers are overwhelmed when problems arise. They are surprised when parents worry about French immersion. After all, they feel that the program has proven its effectiveness and conclude that parents are unduly concerned.

This study reveals that teachers are not adequately trained to deal with parental concerns regarding the education of their children in French immersion. Knowing the nature of French immersion, it is surprising that public relations are not given more importance at the school level, and are not a mandatory component of French immersion teacher training program. To improve and maintain enrollment in French immersion, the question of information to all publics in a systematic and regular fashion has to be addressed by teachers, school and district administrators, and universities.

Success

49. According to you, what does it mean to succeed in grade one French immersion?

Answers to this question revealed that for teachers, students' success in grade one French immersion was measured in terms of proficiency in oral French, development of formal French literacy skills, and for one teacher, achievement of the grade one mathematics program expectations. One teacher mentioned that each child was unique, and that there were as many results as there were children in her classroom.

Teachers described the following French language proficiency and literacy skills expected by students by the end of grade one.

Dealing with familiar social and academic content, children should be able to:

Functions:

Follow directions;
Understand messages;
Express ideas;
Discuss themes;
Decode words;
Read messages;
Read books;
Write words;
Write stories.

Language accuracy:

Good pronunciation;
Complete and well structured sentences.

Attitudes:

Be proud of learning another language;
Feel good about learning in French;
Want to speak French;
Want to continue in the program.

Working habits:

Work independently;
Work with other students;
Work in a French environment.

Success at the end of grade one was mainly evaluated in terms of reading. If a child could not read according to teacher expectations, questions were raised, and difficulties were anticipated for grade two. When it was a question of maturational development, some teachers felt that the child could continue to grow in grade two. For other teachers, it was essential that children meet grade one expectations before moving on to grade two. Many teachers questioned if French immersion was the best educational program for children who experienced difficulties in grade one.

Mathematics expectations were not described, but one teacher referred to mastery of basic skills as described in the program of studies.

50. What are the greatest successes grade one teachers have with students in French immersion?

For all teachers, the greatest success of grade one French immersion was to see the phenomenal second language proficiency development in children from September to June. Major accomplishments highlighted by teachers were seeing children use French spontaneously, and seeing them read and write in French. For individual teachers, success was associated with: children's efforts in learning French, children's expression when talking in French, children's understanding of teacher's humour, children's readable writing, children not making too many mistakes in their dictations, and seeing that children were happy in the program.

One teacher mentioned not ignoring English. For her, it was important to celebrate successes in both languages.

51. According to you, what are the greatest successes of French immersion?

Teachers felt that the great success of French immersion was that children could learn French as a second language in a school

context while learning their academic content through that language. It was also felt that students in the program were proud of understanding and speaking French and developed good attitudes towards languages. By the end of grade six, they were fluent in the language, and by the end of grade twelve, they had the advantage of having developed high levels of proficiency in two languages.

One teacher mentioned that French immersion promoted French in Canada. According to her, French immersion had the potential of bringing Canadians closer, which could in return help solve conflicts between Quebec and the rest of Canada.

Teachers felt that learning a second language, and learning about cultures was an enriching experience for students. They felt that having two languages could open doors to students and give them an advantage over monolingual children.

Discussion of Results

Teachers describe French immersion success in terms of: learning, teaching, and the program's global impact.

At the learning level, teachers describe success in terms of children's linguistic and academic accomplishments. Success in grade one is evaluated in terms of oral language proficiency, formal literacy skills, and academic achievement. All teachers affirm that reading is

the most influential factor in determining children success at the end of grade one.

At the teaching level, teacher's success is described in terms of accomplishment. Great satisfaction is derived from contributing to children's phenomenal second language proficiency development from September to June.

At the program level, teachers describe the French immersion success in terms of its effectiveness in fostering students' development of high levels of French and English proficiency, while learning academic content. They also highlight the program's contribution in fostering children's development of positive attitudes towards languages and the potential positive impact of these attitudes on Canadian politics. Finally, all teachers believe in the enriching aspect of bilingualism for children's life.

Concerns

52. What are the daily problems associated with teaching in French immersion?

Everyday problems experienced at different degrees by immersion teachers were:

In most cases:

No interaction between French immersion children and Francophone children;
No English in grade one (conflicting views on this issue);
Rarity of French aides and substitute teachers;
Imposing amount of time needed for preparing and adapting resources;
Not being able to do everything teachers do in an English program;
Stress of not being understood when speaking in French and always having to make language understood beyond the words.

In some cases:

Lack of support for children experiencing difficulties.

Dual and multi-track schools:

French immersion students are a minority in the school;
Students' school activities are always in English;

French immersion teachers feel lonely, isolated, and sometimes invisible;
School professional activities are always conducted in English;
Teachers feel they are solely responsible for the success of the program in their school.

53. Do you have any concerns with the French immersion program?

Some teachers had a concern with the lack of interaction between the French immersion program and Francophone communities. They felt that a Canadian French immersion program should emphasize interaction between Francophone and Anglophone children so that French immersion students could have a variety of good language models and be exposed to a variety of French cultures.

Some teachers were concerned with the lack of English at the grade one level. They felt that in Alberta, children needed more English than French and would like to see more recognition of children's first language in the program. Some thought that difficulties could be reduced for some students if they could learn to read and write in their first language.

Some teachers were concerned with the optional status of support services for children experiencing difficulties in French immersion. Teachers felt that French immersion was a regular

education program, and, as such, should offer students all the services available in an English program.

Some teachers worried about the decreasing enrollment at the elementary level. They would like to see more value put on second languages and less political interference with the program.

One teacher was concerned with the lack of program options for students who wished to become bilingual in a school context. She felt that more second language program options were needed for students to become bilingual at the school and university levels.

54. According to you what would be the best thing to do to improve the French immersion program?

According to teachers, improving French immersion could be done at the provincial and at the local levels.

First, at the provincial level, teachers see that changes are necessary to improve the curriculum. Provincial policy regarding the introduction of English Language Arts should be more explicit. Current provincial policy allows for the introduction of English Language Arts anytime before grade three. Some teachers strongly felt that it should be in grade one, while some felt as strongly that it should be in grade three. Examples of these conflicting views were expressed by the following two teachers. One teacher referred to one

of her recent experiences to make her point. "Au mois de février, j'ai reçu une petite fille qui n'avait jamais appris le français. Elle avait appris à lire et à écrire en anglais à son ancienne école. Quand elle est arrivée ici, elle a pu transférer ses connaissances de la lecture et de l'écriture de l'anglais au français. Maintenant (à la fin du mois de juin) elle peut très bien s'exprimer oralement et peut écrire des histoires en français." On the other hand, another teacher believed that: "l'anglais en première année c'est trop tôt parce que les enfants ont besoin d'au moins deux ans pour maîtriser le français. Si on présente l'angais et le français en même temps, ils seront confus. Les enfants transfèrent leurs connaissances du français à l'anglais."

In addition to English Language Arts concerns, some teachers believed that the French immersion curriculum should not be a translated English curriculum. The following comment was made regarding this issue: "Les étudiants ne devraient pas avoir à suivre le même programme d'études que les enfants suivent en anglais." Some of their suggestions were: "réduire les thèmes et mieux les développer", "enlever certains sujets et donner plus d'emphase au développement des habiletés de lecture et d'écriture. "encourager la répétition." One teacher would have liked to see more teacher involvement in the development of program of studies

In addition, teachers made the following suggestions regarding program delivery at the local level.

- French immersion is a regular program and as such, should be accountable to all its students. It should offer French immersion students all the services offered to students in English programs.

- Financial support for the program should reflect supplementary costs associated with teaching two language arts curricula and the more expensive costs of French books.

- French immersion should not have a minority status at the school level, having to fight for its existence and success.

- Classes should be small to allow for proper interactions between teacher and students in order to foster the development of a second language. (One teacher mentioned maximum of 20 students).

- Jurisdictions and the schools offering French immersion should value second languages.

- Jurisdictions should improve the stability of the program at the secondary level.

- Jurisdictions should advertise the program and publicize its successes.

- Jurisdictions should inform parents about bilingual education.

- Parents have to be more committed to the program. Now, it is easy to enroll children in the program, but unfortunately, it is just as easy to withdraw them from the program when they experience difficulties.

- Provision should be made for letting children express themselves in their first language.

- Provision should be made for teachers to have access to French resources. Depending on their approach to literacy, some teachers felt that there was a need for authentic French literature in the program.

- More emphasis should be placed on hiring teachers with appropriate French proficiency to teach the program. Although all participants in this study had a native or native-like proficiency in French, some teachers felt that their colleagues did not have adequate proficiency to teach in the program.

- Teachers need opportunities to maintain and improve their French proficiency. Both groups, teachers for whom French is a second language and Francophone teachers, mentioned the need to find opportunities to use their French with other adults. Living in an Anglophone community, they feel the need to be regularly immersed in the language. Some would like to see more exchanges between teachers in this province and teachers from Québec.

Discussion of Results

Teachers expressed some concerns regarding the French immersion program curriculum and delivery. While some concerns regarding teaching in a French immersion program are common to most French immersion teachers, other problems are more specific to the school context.

Common concerns with respect to teaching are the added responsibility of having to adapt and create resources, the stress of

not being understood by children, the impossibility of doing everything English teachers do because of children's language proficiency, and the rarity of program support in French. Common concerns with respect to the program are the lack of interaction between French immersion students and Francophone children, and the lack of English Language Arts in grade one. A concern specific to some schools is the lack of program support for children experiencing difficulties. A concern more specific to dual and multi-track schools is the minority status of children and teachers in the program.

Teachers made suggestions to improve the curriculum at the provincial level, and its delivery at the local level.

At the provincial level, teachers need clearer guidelines regarding the introduction of English Language Arts in the French immersion program. Some teachers feel that English Language Arts in grade one would be more appropriate for the development of formal literacy in Anglophone students and recommend the introduction of English Language Arts in grade one. On the contrary, other teachers think that the use of English in grade one would be detrimental to the learning of French and want to see English introduced only in grade three. Referring to Cummins' interdependency principle, French immersion is based on the principle that students can transfer from second to first language, but completely ignores the possibility of transfer from first to second language. There is a definite need to better understand the role of first language in the development of a second language and a need to

investigate the impact of teaching practices that would foster the transfer of English reading skills to French literacy development in the French immersion program.

Regarding the provincial curriculum for French immersion, teachers highlighted some problems in working with French translations of English first language programs of studies. More recognition should be given to develop immersion programs that would take into account the second language development of students in French immersion programs and a language across the curriculum approach.

At the local program delivery level, teachers would like French immersion to be recognized as a regular program, and, as such, offer students all the support programs offered in English schools. Recognition should be given to the distinctness of French immersion programs, and appropriate professional and financial support should accompany program implementation and delivery. Jurisdictions offering French immersion programs should have explicit beliefs, values and policies regarding bilingual education, that give clear and coherent direction to all aspects of French immersion program delivery at the school level.

Other Considerations

55. What are your professional development needs?

Teachers have indicated some professional development needs regarding French immersion pedagogy. This pedagogy encompasses the integration of teaching subjects and teaching a second language:

- How to teach specific subjects;
- How to teach a second language;
- How to teach subjects in a second language;
- How to evaluate in immersion;
- Planning sessions with other teachers;
- Language processing;
- How to work with centres;
- Small group cooperative work for students;
- Use of literature in teaching reading and writing;
- Sharing with other teachers from other schools and jurisdictions;
- New developments in the field;
- Maintaining or improving French.

56. How can you fulfill your professional development needs?

Teachers mentioned that many professional development opportunities directly related to French immersion were available to them: inservices, planning and sharing sessions with other teachers, visits to other classrooms, consulting services, university courses,

evening classes, summer courses, and local, provincial and national conferences.

In addition, some teachers mentioned participating in some English inservices, but deplored having to translate and adapt everything for their specific situation.

Some teachers recognized that there were several occasions for professional development, but many mentioned not being able to participate because most of these occasions were offered at night or during the summer when they had other family and professional commitments, or were simply too tired to get involved.

57. Are there any other considerations that you would like to add to the interview?

Grade one French immersion teachers, are grade one teachers teaching a grade one curriculum in a language that children merely understand, yet are expected to use it to function socially and academically.

In addition to basic grade one teaching responsibilities, French immersion teachers have to recreate the reality of the target language environment in the classroom. French immersion teachers have to support their language with non-verbal clues, create and

adapt teaching and learning activities and resources, so that children can be gently immersed in the target language.

Teachers recognized that because teaching was an evolving phenomenon, their teaching realities were changing, and they needed to adjust accordingly. They wanted to be able to deal with their frustrations openly and be able to find solutions to overcome their problems. Many teachers mentioned the need to reflect on their practices and to discuss learning in a French immersion program in light of current learning theories.

Grade one French immersion teachers were facing the challenges created by the dynamic nature of our society. Changes in society were having an impact on children entering the program. Teachers noticed that a growing number of children were entering grade one emotionally troubled. "...l'enfant a deux maisons et est entre son père et sa mère. Son père ne le veut pas et sa mère ne le veut pas. Il passe deux jours ici et trois jours là. Cette situation crée des problèmes émotionnels chez les enfants." Subsequently, these emotional problems affect children's predisposition to learning. In other family environments, parents were working and spent a limited time with their children. Many teachers noticed that this evolving socioeconomic condition had resulted in children having a greater need for affection and attention. More and more children were entering school not knowing some basic social rules and not knowing how to behave with other people. This resulted in an

increasing need for teachers to teach politeness and cooperative skills to their students.

Some teachers mentioned a need for better understanding of the principles of bilingual education involved in French immersion. More specifically, many have expressed an uneasiness with teaching reading and writing in a second language. One teacher remembered when she taught grade four French immersion, she taught English and French Language Arts. At that time, she noticed that after she had taught a concept in English, she did not have to reteach it in French. Children would automatically transfer their understanding of the concept from English to French. She observed that this facilitated her teaching of French but questioned if it could be applied to a grade one situation. "Je ne pense pas que ce soit possible de faire ça en première année, parce qu'en première année, les enfants ont besoin de vocabulaire. Quand je parle de transfert, je parle de concepts, techniques et stratégies, pas de vocabulaire."

Teachers believed that grade one French immersion teachers are very special people. The following is a composite profile of a grade one French immersion teacher as described by the teachers themselves:

warm,
sympathetic,
compassionate,
healthy,
patient,

flexible,
adaptable,
creative,
diplomat,
friendly but firm,
good communicator,
very energetic (no quiet time during the day),
love children,
sensitive to children's needs,
available to children and parents,
open to parental involvement,
knowledgeable about child development,
knowledgeable about learning in general,
knowledgeable about second language learning,
knowledgeable about program objectives,
proficient in French.

Discussion of Results

Teachers have mentioned a need for professional development in the area of French immersion pedagogy. A pedagogy is required that encompasses the elements of academic subjects and second language teaching in an integrated approach dealing with teaching subjects through the medium of French as a second language. Teachers have also expressed a need to reflect on their current practices in light of current learning theories.

Teachers recognize that many professional development opportunities are offered, but most of them feel that evening, week end, and summer inservices and courses interfere with their

personal and familial commitments. Teachers also mentioned being often too tired to get involved in professional activities.

Another consideration addressed by teachers is the evolving nature of society and education. Teachers feel that it is timely to re-evaluate current practices to reflect changes in the society.

French immersion was conceived more than twenty-five years ago in St. Lambert, Québec for minority students learning a majority language. This program was later adopted by most provinces in Canada. Teachers in this study claim that the clientele of French immersion is changing. They feel that new parents are not as committed to the program, as were the parents who had to fight for its implementation. As well, they observe that new children demonstrate a greater range of intellectual and socioeconomic characteristics than those of children enrolled in the program ten or fifteen years ago.

Table 1 (adapted from St. Albert School District No. 3, 1992) shows the respective contexts of French immersion at its inception in the early sixties - the 1965 St. Lambert Home-School Language Switch Program; and the French immersion program of the nineties - the 1992 Alberta early total French immersion program.

Table 1

FRENCH IMMERSION 1965-1992

St. Lambert 1965	Alberta 1992
Students	**Students**
. Minority students (English - political/financial power language) learning a majority language (French).	. Majority students (English - political/financial power language) learning a minority language (French). . Students' characteristics are different.
Parents' Aspirations	**Parents' Aspirations**
. That children are integrated into Québec society while keeping their English and Protestant values. (Bilingualism is essential.)	. That children receive best possible education. (Bilingualism is an asset.)
Program Main Objective	**Program Main Objective**
. Bilingualism at the end of grade six.	. Development of high levels of proficiency in English and French at the end of a twelve/thirteen-year program. Learning a language is a lifelong endeavour.
Philosophy Influencing Pedagogy	**Philosophy Influencing Pedagogy**
. Children are empty vessels that have to be filled. School experience is centered on knowledge acquisition.	. Children learn by connecting life experiences to the unknown. School experience is centered on children.
Political Context	**Political Context**
. Canada is officially a monolingual country.	. Canada is officially a bilingual country.

The actual Alberta "Early Total French Immersion Program" is a replication of the St. Lambert "Home-School Language Switch Program". Looking at the two different contexts, and given the

evolutionary nature of education and society, one can question if program delivery practices which were designed for a specific context more than twenty-five years ago, are still the best way to deliver bilingual education to Alberta children in the 90s. In this study, grade one early total French immersion teachers have pointed out a need to revisit: first, curriculum decisions made regarding the provincial program of studies in light of "immersion", and sequence of growth development variables; and second, the role of first language in the development of a second language, especially in the domain of reading and its potential implications for the French immersion program.

Finally, this study reveals that grade one early total French immersion teachers need to demonstrate all the personal and professional characteristics of a teacher in an unilingual program, as well as superior proficiency in French; and mastery in immersion pedagogy and public relations.

CHAPTER V

SUMMARY OF FINDINGS, IMPLICATIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FURTHER RESEARCH

Chapter V provides a summary of the study and some implications that are derived from its findings. As well, recommendations for further research are outlined.

Summary of the Study

The main purpose of this study was to investigate the experiences of grade one early total French immersion teachers delivering a curriculum in French to learners who are learning the language.

Before conducting the study, a literature review was carried out to define an agenda for this research. The literature review, as well as discussions with early total French immersion grade one teachers, highlighted a need for descriptive studies in the field of French immersion teaching. The study was guided by the following two questions.

1. What is teaching at the grade one level of an early total French immersion program?

2. What do grade one early total French immersion teachers think about their teaching experience in the program?

To achieve the goal of this study, an interview questionnaire was developed to investigate and make explicit the teaching experiences of grade one early total French immersion teachers from their perspectives. Ten categories, reflecting the research agenda derived from the literature review and from discussions with grade one early total French immersion teachers, were identified around which to structure the interview framework. These were: background information, planning, teaching, evaluation of student learning, communication with students, communication with colleagues and administrators, communication with parents, success, concerns, other considerations. A total of fifty-seven open-ended questions were further elaborated to allow teachers maximum freedom in their answers. A copy of this questionnaire can be found in the Appendix.

The study population was composed of eleven grade one early total French immersion teachers from eight schools in four school jurisdictions in Edmonton and its surrounding areas. Careful attention was given to have representation from single, dual, and

multi-track school contexts -- the three program delivery contexts prevailing in Alberta at the time of the study.

An individual interview was conducted with each one of the eleven participants. Data was recorded and transcribed, and emerging themes were analyzed in reference to the two research questions.

Major Findings

Findings are reported in accordance with the study's ten categories which are: background information, planning, teaching, evaluation of students' learning, communication with students, communication with colleagues and administrators, communication with parents, success, concerns, other considerations.

Background information

In Alberta, early total French immersion refers to a unique program whose curriculum is mandated at the provincial level. Although there is a unique program, this study has shown that many organizational variations exist at the local delivery level.

The program delivery contexts at the local level varied from single, to dual, to multi-track schools, in which the grade levels

offered represented different combinations of kindergarten to grade nine classes.

Teachers' characteristics revealed that teacher training in French immersion or second language pedagogy was not perceived as a mandatory qualification while proficiency in the language was considered important in staffing decisions for the French immersion program. In this study, not all teachers were Francophone native speakers, but all of them had a native-like proficiency in the language.

This study has demonstrated that school context has a major impact on the degree of teachers' satisfaction regarding the support which they receive at the local level for planning. Satisfaction was directly related to the number of program streams offered in a school. The higher the number of programs offered in a school, the less the teachers were satisfied with the availability and quality of resources available for the French immersion program. Teachers explained that a need to divide priorities between programs resulted in less support for each program offered in dual and multi-track schools.

Planning

Planning for a grade one early total French immersion program is a very complex task that encompasses selecting and sequencing not only academic objectives, but also the appropriate second

language objectives necessary to allow the student to deal with the concepts being studied. In French immersion, French as a second language permeates all aspects of teaching and learning. Besides selecting and sequencing academic objectives, a French immersion teacher has to find, adapt or create resources; identify appropriate learning and evaluation activities; and integrate all these elements in a coherent plan that meets students' needs, interests, learning styles, and linguistic and conceptual development.

This study has shown that the present grade one provincial curriculum does not recognize the complexity of teaching a grade one curriculum in a language that children are learning. The present provincial program is a combination of a French Language Arts curriculum as well as French versions of the English grade one subject curricula. This lack of recognition for the "immersion" reality results in a wide variety of teaching practices at the local level.

Teaching

Teaching in a French immersion program has to respect children's conceptual development as well as their language proficiency in French. Teachers mentioned that some subjects were easier to teach than others at the grade one level in a French immersion program. Subjects which were less language dependent were easier to teach at the beginning of the year. Mathematics was

identified as the easiest subject to teach, while some aspects of formal literacy in French were identified as the most difficult.

Teachers' beliefs regarding their definition of second language learning and academic concept development influenced the way in which they taught their students. More specifically, this study has pointed out a lack of consistency in the way teachers introduced children to formal literacy. Some conflicting views about reading resulted in conflicting teaching practices regarding reading. Some teachers strongly advocated a bottom-up approach while others advocated a top-down or interactive approach.

Furthermore, teachers share different views regarding the role of English in the acquisition of a second language. Some teachers saw the use of English as an integral part of the learning process in a French immersion program, while others saw the use of English as detrimental to the development of French.

Teachers claim that French immersion was labeled a program of choice, but in reality it was treated more as an optional than a regular program. Any child can enroll in the program, but not all students have an equal chance of succeeding. Full accountability is not given to all students in all schools. Support for students experiencing difficulties in the French immersion program is inadequate or non-existent in many schools.

Society's evolving nature has had an impact on the French immersion clientele. Over the last few years, teachers have noticed major changes in French immersion students. New students enrolling in the program show a greater range of intellectual and socioeconomic characteristics, compared to the more homogeneous past clienteles of the program. Furthermore, most new parents enrolling children in the program are less committed to the program than parents who had to fight to implement it a few years ago. In general, parents also have less time to support their children owing to different professional and personal lifestyles. Teachers believe that all these changes call for adaptations in their teaching practices.

Teachers believe that French immersion provides a structured learning environment rich in comprehensible input for students. Learning is developed along a continuum of familiar to unfamiliar, concrete to abstract, structured to open-ended, known to unknown.

Evaluation of Student Learning

There were significant differences in student evaluation practices. The "what", "when", "why", and "how" of evaluation show variations based on teachers' personal beliefs and values and result in inconsistent consequences for students.

Because French language proficiency permeates all aspects of communication and learning in a French immersion program, teachers have to understand the role of second language proficiency

in the development of academic concepts and make decisions regarding the contribution of language in the evaluation of students' overall progress in the program.. In this study, teachers share different views regarding the evaluation of language proficiency in evaluating academic concepts. Current practices demonstrate that some teachers evaluate concepts separately from language proficiency while others evaluate both second language and concept as a unit.

Teachers' expectations regarding student achievement at the end of the year are quite varied. For some teachers, students have to master all of the grade one program objectives in French before being promoted to grade two. For other teachers, mastery of grade one objectives in French is not essential, as they see children's growth continuing in grade two. For all teachers, however, reading is the most influential factor in determining success at the grade one level.

Reporting children's progress to parents is in a state of transition. Teachers favour a descriptive reporting system which could meaningfully explain to parents what children do and how they are progressing in the program. Most teachers are still searching for more appropriate evaluation instruments for use in the French immersion context.

Communication with Students

At the philosophical level, all teachers agree with the basic principle that French should be the only language of instruction and communication with students, but at the practical level, teachers' practices vary. Some teachers use 100% French except when safety is involved, while other teachers advocate a progression showing an increasing use of French and decreasing and limited use of English from September to June, from the beginning to the end of a learning sequence, and when children are frustrated.

When communicating with students, teachers use a variety of strategies that over-emphasize the non-verbal aspects of language in order to help students compensate for their lack of French verbal language.

Communication with Colleagues and School Administrators

School context has an impact on the degree of satisfaction teachers experience regarding communication with colleagues and school administrators.

With regard to communication with colleagues and school administrators, teachers in single-track schools have more opportunities to share and discuss with other colleagues, than do teachers in dual or multi-track schools.

With respect to communication with administrators, teachers in single-track schools are very satisfied with the quality and quantity of their communication with their administrators, while some teachers in dual-track schools feel their administrators do not understand French immersion and are more concerned about dividing priorities between programs than with the success of French immersion. Teachers in multi-track schools are clearly not satisfied with regard to their communication with their administrators and feel their administrators do not understand the program and show little interest it.

The language of communication in dual and multi-track schools raises an important issue. Because of the presence of monolingual English students, teachers, and administrators in such schools, English is the school's official language. In such a situation, French is viewed as a second language of choice for some students and is used in their classroom only. French is not recognized as one of the school's official languages. This practice reinforces the power of English over French, perpetuating the former's social and political dominance in the school context. Lack of awareness that this is taking place is countermining the desired goals of bilingual education.

This study has revealed that commitment to French immersion, knowledge of French, and knowledge about the program are not mandatory requirements for obtaining an administrative position in dual and multi-track schools.

Communication with Parents

Teachers feel that French immersion parents are concerned about their child's global education and are anxious about their child's success in the program. Because of their lack of French proficiency, parents rely completely on the grade one teacher for advice and reassurance regarding all aspects of their child's education. Some feel helpless when it comes to supporting their child's efforts and feel left out of their child's education.

Some schools have recognized a need for parents to be well informed about the French immersion program and have established proactive communication sessions with them, while other schools have no formal means of communication other than the report card. These schools have delegated communication with French immersion parents to French immersion teachers.

Success

Teachers have underlined that the child's motivation, parental support for the child and the program, and school support for all children and the program are essential conditions for success in French immersion.

While each program's objectives is important in grade one, all teachers have mentioned that reading is the most influential factor in determining children's success at the end of grade one.

Teachers are impressed with the achievement of most children in the program. They have observed that at the grade one level, children's French language proficiency development has been phenomenal with no negative impact on either their first language or their academic development.

Concerns

Although French immersion teachers are impressed with the success of the French immersion program, they have raised a few issues in need of attention. These are:

- The absence of English at the grade one level;

- The lack of appropriate support for children experiencing difficulties in the program;

- The lack of interaction between French immersion students and Francophone children;

- The minority status of French immersion students and teachers in dual and multi-track schools.

Other Considerations

Teachers have revealed a need to revisit some aspects of the French immersion program. First there is a need to evaluate curriculum decisions made regarding the provincial program of studies in light of "immersion" variables that integrate second language development, and sequencing of academic concept development. Second, there is a need to understand better the role of first language in the acquisition of a second language, especially in the domain of reading.

Considering the evolutionary nature of education in general and second language education in particular, teachers have identified an ongoing professional development need with respect to French immersion pedagogy -- the interrelated dimensions involved in the teaching of academic subjects through the medium of a second language. As well, teachers have expressed a need to reflect on their practices in the light of current learning theories.

Implications

The experiences of grade one early total French immersion teachers reported in this study reveal that teachers are impressed with the success of the French immersion program. Teachers contend that their current teaching practices are successfully meeting the needs of a considerable majority of children in the program. Nevertheless, they identify three areas in need of attention for French immersion to reach its full potential in the 90s. First, there is a need to better address the needs of students who are experiencing difficulties in the program. Second, there is a need to adapt the program to meet the needs of the new French immersion students who possess more heterogeneous intellectual and socioeconomic characteristics than did their predecessors. And third, there is a need to legitimize French immersion parents' concerns, and a need to reduce or eliminate the source of their anxiety with respect to the overall education of their child in the immersion program.

If the principles of effective bilingual education as proposed by Cummins (1986) are considered, this study has demonstrated that these were taken into account to various degrees in the French immersion program. While no concerns were expressed by teachers regarding three of these principles: additive bilingual enrichment, threshold level of language use, and sufficient communicative interaction, a need to better understand the linguistic interdependence principle was highlighted, specifically in the area of introducing formal literacy to children in the French immersion

program. Actual practices were premised on the one-way transfer from French to English skills. Some teachers identified a need to elucidate the contribution made by the transfer from English to French in the development of bilingual literacy skills in the French immersion program.

In light of the study results, the following implications should be considered at the provincial, local, and university levels:

Provincial level

The provincial Department of Education should continue to show leadership in the French immersion program and increase its influence on decisions that impact on the quality and equality of learning for all children.

1. The program of studies should be redesigned to reflect better a most significant program variable - children's second language development.

2. The provincial curriculum framework should present objectives in terms of learning growth on a continuum basis.

3. Clear directions should be given to jurisdictions for the delivery of French immersion at the local level in terms of organizational structure essential for effective program delivery.

4. Important curriculum decisions regarding the program should be explicit at the provincial level in order to standardize offerings at the jurisdiction level.

5. Standardized student evaluation principles should be promoted at the provincial level to foster consistency and coherence with the objectives of the program, and fairness to all students.

6. French proficiency standards should be established for teaching in the program.

7. Up-dated library resource lists should be provided periodically to school jurisdictions.

Local level

1. Jurisdictions should have explicit beliefs and values regarding bilingual education in order to give clear directions to all aspects of French immersion program delivery at the school level.

2. The following conditions should be mandatory in the selection of French immersion program administrators: commitment to the program, knowledge about the program, and knowledge about the language. Knowledge about the language does not necessarily mean that administrators should have a superior

proficiency level in French, but it should mean that French immersion administrators should at least demonstrate the same commitment to the program that is expected from learners: a positive attitude towards French, a motivation to learn the language, and a willingness to use it. In fact, if the administrator cannot model high levels of proficiency in French, s/he should be a model of what is considered to be a good second language learner.

3. The French immersion program should not have a minority status in a school. If jurisdictions' policies require the program to be offered in a dual or a multi-track setting, special consideration should be given to French becoming one of the school's official languages.

4. A high level French proficiency and training in "immersion" pedagogy are essential qualifications for staffing French immersion programs. Possession of one of these attributes does not compensate for the lack of the other.

5. The added responsibility for creating and adapting resources should be recognized in French immersion teachers' time assignment.

6. Professional development activities should be an integral part of the teacher's assignment.

7. French immersion should be recognized as a regular program and, as such, should offer children all the services that are offered in English medium programs.

8. Consideration should be given to providing opportunities for French immersion students to interact with Francophone children.

University level

1. Teacher training for French immersion should have a mandatory public relation component.

2. A focus on second language acquisition and explicit implications for teaching French immersion students should be part of language development and subject-specific courses.

3. Universities should indicate graduates' French and English proficiency levels explicitly on their final transcript.

4. Cooperative research projects between universities, Departments of education, and schools should be encouraged.

Recommendations for further research

French immersion is at a turning point in its history. Past research studies have demonstrated that French immersion is a viable educational alternative for many students. They have also demonstrated that the French immersion student population can succeed academically as well or better than the student population of monolingual programs. It is now time for educators and researchers to move from a focus on results to concentrate better on process. The question of whether or not students can learn in a French immersion program has been answered. It is now time to find out what are the optimal conditions for students to become bilingual in a school context.

Education is evolving constantly, and French immersion has to evolve in the light of current teaching and learning theories. The Department of Education, local school jurisdictions and university teacher trainers should work cooperatively in maintaining and improving the quality and equality of education offered to French immersion students.

Further research in the following areas could help develop further understanding of French immersion and provide new insights into the field of bilingual education in a school context.

1. A study looking at the impact of teachers' French proficiency on students' second language proficiency development would provide valuable input for staffing practices in the French immersion program.

2. A comparative study among single, dual and multi-track schools to determine the impact of school context on student's French and English language proficiency development would help the development of policies that would support the French immersion program in school jurisdictions.

3. A study to determine the impact of administrators' French language proficiency on teachers' degree of satisfaction with administrative support for the French immersion program would provide input for staffing administrative positions in the French immersion program.

4. A comparative study between early French immersion programs where reading is introduced in English and where reading is introduced in French to evaluate the impact of language selection in the development of reading skills and attitudes in both languages. Results could provide insights into program delivery conditions that will best foster the development of bilingual literacy in a school context.

5. A study to clarify the role of first language development in the acquisition of a second language would help offer maximal

program delivery learning conditions for students at the elementary level.

6. A study looking at transfer from first to second language, and from second to first language would help teachers maximize children's first and second languages in the development of bilingualism in a school context.

7. Theoretical studies looking at the development of academic concepts in a second language could provide a framework for the development of curricula which are delivered through the medium of a second language.

8. Theoretical studies looking at the development of proficiency in French as a second language proficiency in a French immersion program could provide a framework for developing the program's second language expectations and for monitoring and evaluating students' second language proficiency.

9. A descriptive study to investigate the impact of different teachers' beliefs and values regarding reading on the development of students' reading skills and attitudes in the French immersion program could help illuminate which approach would best foster the development of bilingual reading skills in a bilingual school context.

10. Phenomenological studies describing effective teaching and learning strategies in the development of academic and linguistic skills could help improve learning conditions for all students, but more specifically for students experiencing difficulties in a French immersion program.

11. A study looking at the impact of information meetings on parents' anxiety regarding the success of their child in the French immersion program could help jurisdictions develop a communication program for French immersion.

12. An action research study describing the optimal conditions for French immersion program delivery would provide some guidance in the implementation of French immersion in new sites.

13. A study looking at the impact of interaction between French immersion students and Francophone students on French immersion students' language proficiency and attitudes towards Francophone cultures could provide insights into different bilingual program delivery models.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Allwright, D. (1988). Observation in the Language Classroom. Longman Group UK Limited. New York.

Allwright, D. & Bailey, K. M. (1991). Focus on the Language Classroom: An introduction to classroom research for language teachers. Cambridge University Press. N.Y.

Andrew, C. M.; Harley, B.; Kamin, J. (1979). The Immersion Centre and the Dual-Track School: A Study of the Relationship Between School Environment and Achievement in a French Immersion Program. Toronto: The Ontario Institute for Studies in Education.

Barik, H. C. ; Swain, M. (1976). Five Years of Primary French Immersion: Annual Reports of the Bilingual Education Project to the Carleton Board of Education and the Ottawa Board of Education Up to 1975. OISE Toronto.

Brassard, V. (1990). Parents of Students in the French Immersion and English Programs: A Comparative Study. Unpublished Master's Thesis. University of Alberta. Edmonton. Alberta.

Brown, R. W. (1990). The Place of Beliefs and of Concept Formation in a Language Teacher Training Theory. System. 18 (1): 85-96.

Bruck, M. (1984). Consequences of Transfer out of Early French Immersion Programs. McGill Montreal Children's Hospital Learning Centre. Montreal. Quebec.

Bruck, M. (1978). Switching Out of French Immersion. Interchange. 9 (4): 86-94.

Burns, G. E. & Olson, C. P. (1989). Planning and Professionalizing Immersion and Other F.S.L. Programs. The Canadian Modern Language Review. 45 (3): 502-516.

Carey, S. T. (1991). Languages, Literacy and Education. Canadian Modern Language Review. 47 (5): 839-842.

Carey, S. T. (1990). Academic Achievement and reading comprehension in minority and second languages. Canadian Issues in Education. Toronto: Copp Clark Publishers.

Carey, S. T. (1984). Reflections on a Decade of Immersion. Canadian Modern Language Review. 41 (2): 246-259.

Cashion, M. & Eagan, R. (1990). Spontaneous Reading and Writing in English by Students in French Immersion: Summary of Final Report. English Quaterly. 22 (1-2): 30-34.

Chaudron, C. (1988). Second Language Classrooms: Research on teaching and learning. Cambridge University Press. N.Y.

Chmilar, P.; Kendall, J. & Obadio, A. (1984). A Comparison of the Reading Skills of Grade One Students in French Immersion and Regular English Classrooms. B.C.: Educational Research Institute of British Columbia.

Chomsky, N. (1988). Language and Problems of Knowledge. The Managua Lectures. Cambridge. Massachusetts: M.I.T. Press.

Chomsky, N. (1986). Knowledge of Language: Its Nature, Origin and Use. New York: Praeger.

Cohen, L, Manion, L. (1989). Research Methods in Education. 3rd ed. Routledge. N.Y.

Collier, V. P. (1989). How long? A Synthesis of Research on Academic Achievement in a Second Language. TESOL Quaterly. 23 (3):509-531.

Cummins, J. (1989). Research Findings From French Immersion Programs Across Canada: A Parents' Guide. Canadian Parents for French. Ottawa. Ont.

Cummins, J. (1989). Language and Literacy Acquisition in Bilingual Contexts. Journal of Multilingual and Multicultural Development. 10 (1): 17-31.

Cummins, J & Swain, M. (1986). Bilingualism in Education: Aspects of Theory, Research and Practice. London: Longman.

Cummins, J. (1983). Language Proficiency and Academic Achievement. in J. Oller Jr. Ed. Issues in Language Testing Research,. Rowley. Massachussett: Newbury House: 108-129.

Cummins J. (1979). Should the Child Who is Experiencing Difficulties in Early Immersion Be Switched to the Regular English Program? A Reinterpretation of Trites' Data. Canadian Modern Language Review 36 (1): 139-146.

Cziko, G. A. (1992). The Evaluation of Bilingual Education: From Necessity and Probability to Possibility. Educational Researcher. March 1992: 10-15

Edelsky, C. (1986). Writing in a Bilingual Program: Habia una vez. Ablex Publishing Corporation. Norwood. New Jersey.

Ewart, G. (1990). Transfers, Interference and the English Language Arts Program. Canadian Association of Immersion Teachers. 10 (1): 13-14.

Fagan, W. T. & Eagan, R. L. (1990). The Writing Behavior in French and English of Grade Three French Immersion Children. English Quaterly. 22 (3-4) 157-168.

Gagné, E. (1991). Les Artisanes de l'Ombre. Education et Francophonie. XIX (3): 66-70.

Genesee, F. (1987). Learning Through Two Languages. Cambridge. Massachusetts: Newbury House.

Genesee, F. (1985). Second Language Learning Through Immersion. Review of Educational Research. 55 (4): 541-561

Genesee, F. (1983). Bilingual Education of Majority Language Children. The Immersion Experiments in Review. Applied Psycholinguistics. 4: 1-46.

Genesse, F. (1979). Acquisition of Reading Skills in Immersion Programs. Foreign Language Annals. 12: 71-77.

Giasson, J. (1990). La compréhension en lecture. Gaëtan Morin Editeur. Québec. Canada.

Goodman, K. S. (1973). Analysis of Oral Miscues. In F. Smith (ed.), Psycholinguistics and Reading. Reinhard and Winston. N. Y.

Hammerly, H. (1989). French Immersion Myths and Reality, Detselig Enterprises Ltd. Calgary. Canada.

Harley, B.; Hart, D.; & Lapkin, S. (1986). The Effects of early Bilingual Schooling on First Language Skills. Applied Psycholinguistics. 7 (4): 295-322.

Hayden, H. M. R.; Fagan, W. T.; Brailsford A. (1991). Emergent Writing in English and French: Language Control. Reflections on Canadian Literacy. 9 (2): 111-117.

Hayden, H. M. R. (1988). French Immersion Drop-Outs: Perspectives of Parents, Students and Teachers. Reading Canada Lecture. 6 (4): 222-235.

Hayden, H. M. R. (1985). Reading in French Immersion: A Pot-Pourri of Concerns. Reading Canada Lecture. 3 (1), 49-55.

Hycner, R. H. (1985). Some Guidelines for the Phenomenological Analysis of Interview Data, in Cohen, L. and Manion L. (1989) Research Methods in Education, 3rd ed. Routledge. N.Y.

John-Steiner, V. (1985). Culture, Communication and Cognition. In Wertsch J.V. (Ed). New York: Cambridge University Press.

Jones, J. (1984). Multilingual Approach Reflects Canadian Mosaic. Language and Society. Commissioner of Official Languages. Ottawa. 12 Winter: 33-38.

Keeps, L. (1992). Differences in the Role of the School Psychologist as a Function of Differences in French Immersion. Unpublished raw data. Paper presented to Ed Admin 505. University of Alberta. AB.

Kendall, J.; Lajeunesse, G.; Chmilar, P. (1987). Longitudinal Examination of Kindergarten Grade One and Grade two French Immersion Students' English Reading Skills. Contact. 6 (1): 2-8.

Krashen, S. (1984). Immersion: Why it Works and What it Has Taught Us. Language and Society. 12:61-64.

Lamarre N. (1989). The Experiences of Anglophone Elementary Principals with French Immersion Programs. Unpublished Master's Thesis. University of Alberta. Edmonton. Alberta.

Lambert, W. E., & Tucker, R. G. (1972). Bilingual Education of Children. Massachusetts: Newbury House Publishers Inc.

Lapkin, S.; Swain, M.; & Shapson, S. (1990). French Immersion Research Agenda for the 90s. The Canadian Modern Language Review. 46 (4): 638-674.

Lussier, D. (1991). Evaluation: A Communicative - Experiential Approach. Professional Development Plan. French as a Second Language. Centre Educatif et Culturel Inc. Montréal, P.Q.

Malicky, G. V.; Fagan, W. T.; Norman, C. A. (1988). Reading Processes of French Immersion Children Reading in French and English. Canadian Journal of Education. 13 (2): 277-289.

McEachern, W. (1980). Parental Decision for French Immersion: A Look at Some Influencing Factors. The Canadian Modern Language Review. 36 (2): 238-246.

McGillivray, W. P. (1984). School Systems Make it Work. Language and Society. Commissioner of Official Languages. Ottawa. Canada. 12: 26-29.

Melikof, O. (1972). Parents as Change Agents in Education: The St. Lambert Experiment. In Bilingual Education of Children: The St. Lambert Experiment. Lambert & Tucker eds., Rowley Massachusetts: Newbury House: 219-236.

Merriam, S. B. (1988). Case Study Research in Education A qualitative Approach. Jossey-Bass Inc. Publishers, San Francisco. California.

Moeller, P. (1987). No, Sarah, Early Immersion Is Not For You, Canadian Children. 12 (2): 7-14.

Pérez, B. & Torres-Guzman, M. E. (1992). Learning in Two Worlds. Longman. New York.

Reynolds, A. G. (1991). Bilingualism, Multiculturalism, and Second Language Learning. The McGill Conference in Honour of Wallace E. Lambert. Lawrence Erlbaum Associates Publishers. Hillsdale, New Jersey.

Richards, J. C. (1990). The Language Teaching Matrix. Cambridge Press University. New York. U.S.A.

Safty, A. (1989). Some Reflections on a Decade in the French Immersion Classroom. Canadian Modern Language Review. 46 (4):. 638-674.

Sax, G. (1979). Foundations of Educational Research. Prentice Hall. New Jersey. U.S.A.

Shapson, S. M. & Day, E. M. (1982). A Longitudinal Evaluation of an Early Immersion Program in British Columbia. Journal of Multilingual and Multicultural Development. 3 (1): 1-16.

Skager, R.W., Weinberg, C. (1971). Fundamentals of Educational Research: an introductory approach, Scott, Foresman and Company. Illinois. U.S.A.

Snow, C. E. (1992). Perspectives on Second-Language Development: Implications for Bilingual Education. Educational Researcher. March 1992: 16-19.

Student Evaluation Branch. (1992). Language of Testing Study Report. May 1992. Student Evaluation Branch. Alberta Education. Edmonton. AB.

St. Albert School District No. 3. (1992). French Immersion: Revisiting Program Delivery at the Elementary Level. Unpublished Discussion Paper. St. Albert. Alberta.

Swain, M. (1990). Three Basic Questions about French Immersion: Research Findings. So You Want Your Child to Learn French. Ottawa: Canadian Parents For French.

Swain, M. (1983). Bilingualism Without Tears. In Clarke, MA and Handscombe J. (eds.). On TESOL 82: Pacific Perspectives on Language Learning and Teaching. Washington, D.C.: 35-46.

Swain, M.; Lapkin, S.; & Andrew, C. M. (1981). Early French Immersion Later On. Journal of Multilingual and Multicultural Development. 2: 1-23

Tardif, C., & Weber, S. (1987). A Call for New Perspectives. The Canadian Modern Language Review. 44 (1): 67-77.

Tétrault, G. G. (1984). Concerns Identified by Principals of French Immersion Schools in Saskatchewan. Unpublished Master's Thesis. University of Saskatchewan. Saskatoon. Saskatchewan.

Thériault, C. (1990). A Survey of Reading Attitudes of Fourth Grade Boys and Girls in French Immersion. Contact. 9 (3): 9-13.

Titone, R. (1990). early Bilingual Growth as an Objective of basic Education. The Canadian Modern Language Review. 46 (4): 675-688.

Titone, R. (1983). Second Language Learning: An Integrated Psycholinguistic Model. In Bain, Bruce (ed). The Sociogenesis of Language and Human Conduct. New York. Plenum.

Tuckman, B. W. (1988). Conducting Educational Research Harcourt Brace Jovanovich Inc. Orlando. Florida.

Vygotsky, L.S. (1962). Thought and Language. Cambridge. Massachusetts: MIT Press.

Wagner, D. A.; Spratt, J. E. & Abdelkader, E. (1989). Does Learning to Read in a Second Language Always Put the Child at a Disadvantage? Some Counterevidence from Morocco. Applied Psycholinguistics. 10: 31-48.

Weber, S. & Tardif, C. (1991). Assessing L_2 Competency in Early Immersion Classrooms. The Canadian Modern Language Review. 47 (5): 916-932.

Weber, S. & Tardif, C. (1990). The Young Child's View of Starting French Immersion. So You Want Your Child to Learn French. Ottawa: Canadian Parents For French.

Williams, J. D. & Snipper, G. C (1990). Literacy and Bilingualism. Longman. New York.

Wiss, C. (1989). Early French Immersion Programs May Not be Suitable for Every Child. The Canadian Modern Language Review, 45 (3): 517-529.

Wiss C. (1987). Issues in the Assessment of Learning Problems in Children from French Immersion Programs: A Case Study Illustration in Support of Cummins. The Canadian Modern Language Review, 43 (2): 302-313.

APPENDIX

EXPERIENCES DES PROFESSEURES

DE PREMIERE ANNEE

IMMERSION PRECOCE TOTALE

QUESTIONNAIRE

Partie 1.	INFORMATION GENERALE
Partie 11.	PLANIFICATION DE L'ENSEIGNEMENT
Partie 111.	ENSEIGNEMENT
Partie 1V.	EVALUATION DE L'APPRENTISSAGE DES ELEVES
Partie V.	COMMUNICATION AVEC LES ELEVES
Partie V1.	COMMUNICATION AVEC LES COLLEGUES ET L'ADMINISTRATION
Partie V11.	COMMUNICATION AVEC LES PARENTS
Partie V111.	SUCCES
Partie 1X.	INQUIETUDES
Partie X.	AUTRES CONSIDERATIONS

QUESTIONNAIRE

PARTIE 1

Information générale

1. Quel est votre nom?

Ecole

2. A quelle école enseignez-vous?

3. Y a-t-il un programme autre que l'immersion offert à votre école?

4. Quelles années sont offertes à votre école? (K 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9)

5. Où est située l'école?

Langue

6. Quelle est votre langue maternelle?

7. En quelle langue préférez-vous vous exprimer?

8. En quelle langue avez-vous fait vos études

	langue	province
- primaires		
- secondaires		
- universitaires		

9. Où et quand avez-vous appris votre langue seconde?

Education

10. Quelle est votre formation pour enseigner en:

    - première année?
    - immersion?

11. Depuis quand enseignez-vous?

    - total:
    - en immersion:
    - en première année:

PARTIE 11

Planification de l'enseignement

12. Quelles matières enseignez-vous? En quelle langue?

13. Comment organisez-vous vos objectifs au cours de l'année? (thème, mois, sujet, séquence, intégré, etc.)

14. Comment choisissez-vous les activités pour atteindre les objectifs que vous avez à suivre? (critères)

15. Plus spécifiquement au sujet du développment du français, déterminez-vous des objectifs de compétence en langue seconde pour vos étudiants? (Qu'est-ce que vos élèves devraient pouvoir dire ou faire en français?)

16. Est-ce que vous planifiez seul ou avec d'autres?

17. Avez-vous les ressources nécessaires pour planifier?

18. Avez-vous l'appui nécessaire au niveau de l'école et du conseil scolaire pour réaliser vos objectifs?

19. Quelles sont les difficultés qu'un professeur de première année rencontre en ce qui concerne la planification de l'enseignement en immersion?

PARTIE 111

Enseignement

20. Quelle est la matière la plus facile à enseigner? Pourquoi?

21. Quelle est la matière la plus difficile à enseigner? Pourquoi?

22. Avez-vous les ressources nécessaires pour enseigner votre programme en français?

23. Quelles stratégies particulières utilisez-vous pour enseigner à des élèves qui ne comprennent pas le français?

24. Que faites-vous pour faire parler les élèves en français?

25. Que faites-vous avec les élèves qui ont des difficultés d'apprentissage?

PARTIE 1V

Evaluation de l'apprentissage des élèves

26. Comment évaluez-vous vos élèves? (Quels sont vos critères pour déterminer le niveau de succès, difficulté, échec?)

27. Quand vous évaluez un élève, par exemple en sciences, évaluez-vous le concept scientifique (compréhension du concept) séparément de ce que l'élève dit en français de ce concept?

28. Si un élève est faible en français, comment évaluez-vous les concepts des autres matières?

29. Comment évaluez-vous le niveau de français de vos élèves? (critères)

30. Selon vous, quelle est la matière la plus facile à apprendre pour les élèves?

31. Selon vous, quelle est la matière la plus difficile à apprendre pour les élèves?

32. Quels sont les problèmes associés à l'évaluation des élèves en immersion?

33. Etes-vous libre d'évaluer vos élèves comme vous le voulez ou suivez-vous des critères établis par l'école? (Que sont ces critères)?

PARTIE V

Communication avec les élèves

34. Parlez-vous seulement en français avec vos élèves?

35. Comment, en parlant en français, réussissez-vous à établir un contact chaleureux avec vos élèves?

36. Comment, en parlant en français, réussissez-vous à utiliser le connu les élèves en anglais pour les amener à apprendre l'inconnu en français?

37. Vous attendez-vous à ce que les élèves parlent toujours en français?

38. Quelles techniques utilisez-vous pour aider les élèves à s'exprimer en français?

39. Que faites-vous quand les élèves vous parlent en anglais?

40. Pensez-vous que tous les élèves peuvent réussir en immersion?

PARTIE V1

Communication avec les collègues et l'administration

41. Quels aspects de l'immersion discutez-vous avez avec vos collègues?
    - de quelle manière:
    - en quelle circonstance:

42. Quels aspects de l'immersion discutez-vous avec vos administrateurs?

43. Est-ce que vos administrateurs parlent français?

44. Etes-vous satisfait(e) de la fréquence et de la qualité de communication que vous avez avec vos collègues et administrateurs?

PARTIE V11

Communication avec les parents

45. Quels sujets de communication initiez-vous avec les parents?
    - de quelle manière?
    - en quelle circonstance?

46. Quels sujets de communication les parents initient-ils avec vous?
    - de quelle manière?
    - en quelle circonstance?

47. Pensez-vous que les parents sont anxieux face au succès de leurs enfants en immersion? (Quelles sont leurs inquiétudes?)

48. Que faites-vous avec les parents qui s'inquiètent du succès de leurs enfants en immersion?

PARTIE V111

Succès

49. Selon vous, que veut dire réussir en première année immersion?

50. Quels sont les plus grands succès que vous vivez avec vos élèves en immersion?

51. D'après-vous, quels sont les plus grands succès du programme d'immersion?

PARTIE 1X

Inquiétudes

52. Quels sont les problèmes que vous vivez chaque jour en enseignant en immersion?

53. Y a-t-il quelque chose qui vous inquiète avec le programme d'immersion? (problème sérieux)

54. Selon vous, quelle serait la meilleure chose à faire pour améliorer le programme d'immersion?

PARTIE X

Autres considérations

55. Quels sont vos besoins de perfectionnement en tant que professeure de première année immersion?

56. Comment pouvez-vous répondre à ces besoins de perfectionnement?

57. Y a-t-il d'autres considérations que vous voudriez ajouter à ce questionnaire?